



# BiNet News

Winter 1998

A publication of the Bisexual Network of the USA

## Rita Hester Vigil Held

Rita Hester, a male-to-female transsexual, was found in her Allston apartment November 28, suffering from multiple stab wounds to the chest.

She died shortly afterwards. So far there have been no reports of suspects.

The majority of the local media (Bay Windows, Boston Globe, Boston Herald and local television) have so far represented Rita disrespectfully and inaccurately as a "a man who sported long braids and preferred women's clothes" and a transvestite.



The Boston Bisexual/Transgender communities (including the Bi Resource Center, Biversity, BBWN, Gender Talk radio) organized around the hate crime and its subsequent misreporting. They held a candlelight vigil, a truth rally, created their own press releases, web sites ([www.ritahester.org](http://www.ritahester.org)), organized a letter writing campaign to the offensive media.

(More on Rita Reactions on page 7)

## CALLING ALL BISEXUALS AND ALLIES: EQUALITY BEGINS AT HOME!

### WHAT IS EQUALITY BEGINS AT HOME?

#### The Plan

During the week of March 21-27, 1999, BTLG activist and our allies across the country will plan and participate in actions to promote equality and justice at the state level.

#### The Goal

- ▽ To strengthen bisexual, transgender, lesbian, and gay, (BTLG) and organizing efforts in every state and territory.
- ▽ To draw national attention to our efforts to pass hate crimes laws, civil rights laws, supportive family laws, and to fight anti-gay initiatives at the state level.
- ▽ To unite across state lines through nationally coordinated actions and strategies.

#### Get Involved!

BiNet USA endorsed the goals of EBAH in 1998 and during the Regional Organizer retreat in November ideas were enthusiastically presented for making a bi presence in the states and territories. Everyone is encouraged to get involved in your state/territory BTLG

coalition. Some suggestions include creating a Bi or Bi&Trans day and do education and lobbying around our perspectives and issues. More colorful approaches include a demonstration or action with painted faces, colored hair, special buttons, t-shirts etc. There is no limit as to what can be done. Main events will feature a broad range of activities including lobby days, rallies and demonstrations on state capitals, and public education events highlighting key BTLG issues. Plans should also include strategies for effective multicultural and coalition organizing.

**To get involved, work with a local or state bi organization and work with your state coalition by attending and participating in the planning meetings.**

**If there is no bi group near you, contact your Regional Organizer or a National Coordinator. They can help start a bi group in your area.**

The state coalitions play a key role and are loosely organized in a national Federation of State BTLG Organizations. The federations

first meeting marked a critical moment for the BTLG movement as state groups pushed forward with plans for Equality Begins at Home actions in states and territories during March 21-27, 1999.

"It's been exciting to see the heightened focus on statewide organizing that's developed since the Federation's inception two years ago," said Dianne Hardy-Garcia, Federation co-Chair. "We're thrilled by the continued growth of the Federation

(Continued on page 11)

### Inside BiNet:

Bi Politics and Politicians	5
Trans/Bi News	8
Bi Symbols	6
Creating Change	12
Bi Families	16
Bisexual Sightings	25
VRP: Emily Pitt Interview	28



## Binet News

A publication of Binet USA

**Editrix** Wendy Curry

**Proofreading** Kim Ward

## Distribution

Wendy Curry Ann Schrans

## Contributors

Jennifer Hadlock	Jon Spinner
Penelope W	Terri Ann Johnson
Fritz Klein	Loraine Hutchins
Timothy D Turner	Tom Limoncelli
Julie W. Myke S.	Lin E. BC
Lani Ka'ahumanu	Ron Owen
Heather Franek	Marcella Bucknam
Michael Page	

## Binet's Mission

is to collect and distribute information regarding Bisexuality; to facilitate the development of Bisexual community and visibility; to work for the equal rights and liberation of Bisexuals and all oppressed peoples; and to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the Bisexual community. We are committed to being affirmatively inclusive of a multicultural constituency and political agenda.

Copyright 1998 by BiNet USA. All rights reserved. Reprint with consent only. Publication of the name or photo of any person, organization or ad is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person, organization or business.

The views of columnists and/or contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of BiNet USA.

Letters, cartoons, photographs and articles are encouraged and welcome for consideration. Please send to BiNet USA, 1201 Wilson Blvd #110-311 Arlington, VA 22203-1809

### Ad Rates:

Business Card Size	\$10
Quarter Page	\$25
Half Page	\$40
Full Page	\$75

## National Coordinators

Stephanie Berger (virago@binetusa.org)  
 Kris Rochling (kris@binetusa.org)  
 Timothy Turner (turner@binetusa.org)  
 Ron Owen (Ron.Owen@binetusa.org)  
 Marcella Bucknam (quest@binetusa.org)  
 Jon Spinner (jspinner@binetusa.org)

## Regional Organizers

**Northeast Region:** Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island

Kim W. (kimw@binetusa.org)  
 Susan C. (schmoo@binetusa.org)

**Tri-State Region:** Connecticut, New Jersey, & New York

Jennifer Hadlock (idea@binetusa.org)  
 Tom Limoncelli (tal@binetusa.org)  
 Penelope W. (Y) (penelope\_ny@hotmail.com)

**Mid-Atlantic Region:** District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, & West Virginia

Julie W. (juliewalko@yahoo.com)  
 JB Fields (jbfields@msn.com)

**Southeast Region:** Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, & the Virgin Island

Kate C. (kecclemm@binetusa.org)

**Central Region:** Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Michigan, & Ohio

Robert Morrison (robert@ais.net)  
 Brett Beemyn (brett\_beemyn@ccmail.wiu.edu)  
 Karen Unholz (Y) plastic\_fish@hotmail.com)

**South Central Region:** Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, & Texas

Deborah D. (morigel@binetusa.org)  
 Sharla C. (sharlac@binetusa.org)

**Midwest Region:** Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota,

Missouri, South Dakota, Michigan

Terri Ann I. (gr14ml@hotmail.com)  
 Mike S. (daddybear@binetusa.org)

**Southwest Region:** Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, & Utah

Lin E. (binetcofo@binetusa.org)  
 Tarita T. (tarita@binetusa.org)  
 Stevi B. (Y) (stevi3@binetusa.org)

**Northwest Region:** Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington, & Wyoming

Brittany W. (brittany@binetusa.org)  
 Nicole Kristal (Y) (nikristal@gladstone.uoregon.edu)

**Pacific Coast Region:** California, Guam, & Hawaii

Melissa White (mwhite@ggu.edu)  
 Michael Szymanski (mikeszy@aol.com)

(Y) indicates youth Organizer

## Corrections, Omissions

Loraine Hutchins' name was misspelled. Our editor sees her name and can't help but think "girl".

We apologize for the mailing chaos generated from the lack of postage on several newsletters. This won't happen again.

Mike is something you speak into.  
 Myke is someone you speak to!

# Letter from Our Editor

BiNetUSA, as the largest national bisexual organization, has a tough task. It strives to represent all bisexuals, regardless of race, creed, gender, marital status, "out"-ness, religion, lifestyle, or class.

Often, during the day-to-day running of such a broad organization, our focus is on national tasks - decreasing biphobia, increasing bi visibility, fighting oppression in all its forms - we forget to mention how committed we are to addressing the needs of all bisexuals.

The leadership of BiNetUSA is truly a subset of the group. Organizers are married, have chosen not to marry until everyone has the right, committed to a swinger/polyamorous/monogamist lifestyle.

We have Pagans, Atheists, Agnostics, Catholics, Wiccans, Jewish, Buddhists, and Christian members. Our leaders are White, Black, Native American, Latino/a.

There are wimmin, women, transgenders, men. We've got femmes and butches, clothing from gender fucks to mainstream styles. We have people in the leather community, the BDSM community, hedonists, as well people into more mainstream sexual expressions. Some embrace the term "queer"; others are repulsed by the word. Some are young, others mid-life, others are enjoying retirement.

We have vegetarians, omnivores, and carnivores. We are home-makers, engineers, unemployed, students, social workers. We run the gamut from straight-identified to gay-identified. Most importantly, there are people who fit into none of these categories, who are typically categorized as *etcetera*.

It can be frustrating at times, trying to accomplish the task at hand, with all the differences. But, in the end, we are a stronger group because of this diversity. It's my opinion that it's our number one job to reach all bisexuals, regardless of the above mentioned categories. BiNetUSA is striving to in-

crease visibility in all communities. We can best do this by sharing our voices - all voices.

The multicultural initiative, led by Brett Beemyn, is trying to reach out to all members of all ethnicities and the differently abled. They need more voices. If you have an interest in this discussion, please contact Brett at [brett\\_beemyn@ccmail.wiu.edu](mailto:brett_beemyn@ccmail.wiu.edu).

The rural initiative is attempting to decrease the isolation felt by bi's in the non-urban areas. How do people with no local bisexual community stay connected? How do we help people separated by distance feel a sense of community? If you are interested in this initiative, please contact Marcella Bucknam, [quest@binetusa.org](mailto:quest@binetusa.org).

The Technology Resource Initiative's goal is to find a place for BiNet and BiNet members in this modern world. There are techies and technophobes. Some voices push for more internet-based communication; others remind us not to isolate people who choose to live in the "real world." One of our big tasks is providing organizers with the tools needed to communicate in the cyber world. If you are interested in this discussion, please contact Jon Spinner, [jspinner@binetusa.org](mailto:jspinner@binetusa.org).

The youth initiative reaches out to people under the age of 25. It is our belief that the youth of this nation face problems with respectability, coming out, finding a voice. We provide them a forum to discuss these issues. Please contact Timothy Turner ([turner@binetusa.org](mailto:turner@binetusa.org)) for more information.

There has been talk of late about the more seasoned members of the Bisexual community. There is much interest in reaching out to the

older community. Issues with the finding your identity later in life... Or earlier in life and having to adapt to the "queer" world. Issues of health, the exodus of our elders from organized Bi communities, and being ignored in this youth-centered world are so important - and often ignored. Interested parties should contact Marcella Bucknam, [quest@binetusa.org](mailto:quest@binetusa.org).

I'd like to increase discussion across groups of all partnership status. One thing I've seen in earlier discussions (bi communities world wide, this is not a BiNet issue) is strong feelings of us and them. It's easy to understand - there is so much lifestyle-phobia out there, groups quickly become polarized. Married Bisexuals may feel they aren't "queer" enough. While others in same sex relationships might resent the married people's heterosexist privilege. Some polyamorists, tired of majority judgement, choose to surround themselves with similar people. Monogamist Bisexuals feel unwelcome after hearing terms like "unenlightened" and "myth of Monogamy". Swingers feel like everyone's crazy aunt, locked in the closet; that, in an attempt to dispel Bi stereotypes, we've thrown them under the bus. If anyone is interested in continuing this discussion, please contact myself ([wendyc@binetusa.org](mailto:wendyc@binetusa.org)) or the newsletter ([newsletter@binetusa.org](mailto:newsletter@binetusa.org)).

We're always looking for regional organizers. However, if you feel you can't commit that much time, these initiatives are a great way to get involved. We want to hear from you!!! If you're interested in suggesting another initiative, or leading a discussion not mentioned, please contact one of the sextet.

- Wendy Curry

## Passages

- Gerry White, BiNet Colorado organizer. He was a long-time activist with the Bisexual Center of San Francisco in the early 80s, and was the editor of last year's BiNet Colorado newsletter.



# Letters to Other Editors: Opinions on Bisexuality in the Media

**From Out Magazine, Jan 1999**

**ENDLESS LOVE** I was amused to see Ian McKellen and Your writer out my late husband, William A. Henry III, tasteless as it was ["To Sir, With Love" by David A. Keeps, October]. Not only has Ian met me; I received a moving personal note from him when Bill died suddenly four years ago. At least Bill was acknowledged as the originator of the term outing, noted first by William Safire several years ago.

Anyone who knew my husband even slightly was well aware that he was a man of appetite in all things, and kept no secrets.

It's been my observation that most gay men seem unwilling to accept the possibility of bisexuality. To them, any man who says he's bisexual is really gay but can't or won't admit it. I suppose that choice diminishes their chances of getting a date.

I was not a "cover" for Bill's gayness. I was a partner in all senses of the word with whom Bill chose to spend his life. I feel privileged to have shared 14 years with one the great thinkers and analytic writers of our time. The rules of our marriage-of any marriage-are nobody else's business.

And, Ian, it's the sunsets I miss, too.

GAIL M. HENRY, BOSTON

**From On Our Backs, Dec 1998**

Congratulations on the triumphant return of On Our Backs! Intelligence, eroticism, and creativity were abundant in the first two new issues; I especially loved the two butches (August/September 1998) in the last one- they looked like they were having a blast! Now for my one concern. There seems to be a large number of bisexuals at On Our Backs, which is great-I'm bi myself-but I read your magazine for the wimmin. It would be a shame to lose our only source of feminist women's porn to excessive inclusiveness. Adventure Girl may consider it risqué to swing with a wife and husband (August/September 1998), but I can think of no more depressing cliché.

Melissa Keith, Ontario, Canada

OOB responds:

We own a bi-o-meter and it's our policy to demand bi-readings of every person who wishes to associate with our magazine. One model went down

on a man last year and we're still burning candles in her memory,

Thanks for calling us on our grave mistake: including bi-women along with true dykes, real dykes, and only dykes.

(Ed note: we're pretty sure OOB's response was meant to be sarcastic)

*Open Letter to Time Magazine:*

In the Michael Huffington article (Time, Dec 21, 1998), Huffington declares himself Bisexual ("First of all, Huffington says, he thinks of himself not as gay but as probably bisexual: in other words, his marriage to the former Arianna Stassinopoulos wasn't a total sham."). However, the title of the article was: *A Politician Comes Out: Michael Huffington, after years of struggle, reveals that he's gay--and starts a new life as a gay activist.*

Cheers to you for correcting esquire magazine's misrepresentation of Huffington. But jeers for the title. The impact of the correction is minimized when the title perpetrates the myth.

- Wendy Curry, Manchester, NH

## Cartoon Guide to Gender (part 2) by norrie mAy-welby



Look for Part 3 of CGG in the Spring issue!

**Full Cartoon available at:**

<http://www-personal.usyd.edu.au/~sfraser/cat/ultra/ultra5.html>

## Bisexual Politics and Politicians

### Kate Brown muses Oregon Gay Rights issues

By CHARLES E. BEGGS

SALEM, Ore. -- Even though an openly bisexual woman now holds one of the Oregon Legislature's top leadership posts, she believes gay rights supporters may have a hard time getting their agenda passed next year.

"I'm skeptical of the leadership," said Sen. Kate Brown, D-Portland, the newly elected Senate minority leader. She noted that the breakdown in the Senate is still 17-13 in favor of the Re-

publicans, so despite any influence she may have for gay rights issues, her caucus will still be outgunned.

Brown said gay rights backers might have to settle for small steps, such as the last session's funding of a state coordinator to help prevent teen suicides, of which gays make up a significant share.

"We're treading lightly," said Jean Harris of Basic Rights Oregon, the biggest gay rights advocacy organization in the state. She sees the group's pos-

ture as a mainly defensive one. If the Legislature pushes an extreme right-wing bill on gays "we'll be there to prevent them from passing bad things. ... It's a fight against the religious right-wing agenda."

"We're sort of waiting to see how many anti-gay things are going to come up and whether they'll pass the employment bill after 23 years," Harris said. "The employment bill is the only thing on the front burner."

- Associated Press, November 22, 1998

### Mantilla Campaign

Evelyn Mantilla is one of two openly bisexual state legislators in the country. She is a State Representative from Hartford, Connecticut. She was just re-elected. While I worked on her first two campaigns, this one was different because she is now "out" as bisexual.

I have been friends with Evelyn since before she came out. Actually the day she came out as bisexual in front of the whole crowd at the 1997 Pride Gathering was the first time I had ever heard her speak the word bisexual.

She first won election in February 1997 after losing the previous November to the incumbent. The incumbent lost his position after being found guilty of voter fraud and other charges. Evelyn beat five potential replacements, but chose not to come out at that time. The summer after she was elected she came

out and proposed to her partner. They were married in January 1998.

This November, Evelyn won reelection even though she had both a primary and an independent right wing

opponent to defeat. She won both fights. I worked on her campaign along with many other bisexuals, drag queens, gay men, lesbians and plenty of straight folks. We had a great time. Evelyn managed to stay strong even though her opponent had been one of the key organizers of the rally in the Bahamas which was successful in keeping a women's cruise ship from docking at a port. He utilized tactics which had been unsuccessfully employed in other campaigns in predominantly latino communities. He pasted hundred of posters all over the district which read "No Metas La Pata" (which has two meanings one of which is "Don't put in the dyke"). Some of Evelyn's constituents were at first afraid to touch her hand

when she came knocking on their doors because her opponent had been telling people she was teaching anal sex to young children.

On election day, her opponent drove from poll to poll not delivering voters, but to blare loud music with similar offensive phrases. One of the

people handing out his fliers told voters "Vote against homosexuality in the schools".

Over and over in the queer press Evelyn was referred to as a lesbian. I wrote a letter after several bisexuals had called to complain and ask for corrections without positive results. Evelyn is an easy candidate to work for because I believe in her. She is a progressive, Puerto Rican bisexual woman married to a woman. She stands up in the State legislature and says, "I am a bisexual woman..." It is awesome!!!

I am excited to say I helped organize two fundraisers which raised a few thousand dollars for her campaign as well as plenty of phone calling, poll standing and driving voters to the polls on election day.

Evelyn has inspired at least three other local bisexuals to seriously consider running for office.

I know that her re-election is positive for her district as well as all of the city of Hartford, the state and the national bisexual movement.

- Jennifer Hadlock

# The Importance of Bisexual Symbols

I have seen the bisexual movement grow over these many years. From the late 70's, when only a few cities had small Bi groups (San Francisco, New York and Washington DC were three of them), to the present time when there are in existence over 2,000 local Bi organizations, a national magazine (Anything That Moves), a national organization (BiNet USA), and international Bi conferences every two years (1998 it was held in Boston and in 2000 it will take place in Rotterdam).

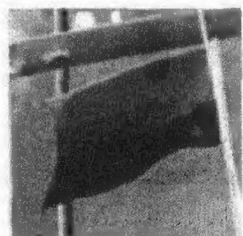
Over the years I have seen how the Bi community wanted to have its own symbols. The first widely used were various combinations of the female/male circles with an attached cross for the female and an arrow for the male - three and four being the most common one. Of course, one implication was that to be bisexual one had to be in a threesome or foursome.

The second most common Bi

symbol used was a "take off" from the gay movement - two triangles (one in back of the other) one pink, the other blue. Some bisexuals felt it relied too much on the gay symbol and did not really express the bisexual condition.

This past year saw the introduction of two new Bi symbols.:

A. Amazon Woman [amazonwoman@mindspring.com](mailto:amazonwoman@mindspring.com)) created a three looped



symbol expressing a person's feminine side, masculine side, their own individual, and where they are on the continuum. They are very beautiful and available as necklaces, anklets, on T-shirts, and

broaches in either gold or silver. She has promoted these items at all the major Bi conferences and they can be bought over the internet at: <http://www.amazonink.com>



[amazonink.com](http://amazonink.com)

B. A most important new Bi symbol was created last month by Mike Page who began the BiCafe - a wonderful and colorful BiPride Flag. It has three horizontal stripes: magenta, turquoise, and royal blue. The flag, as well as mugs, t-shirts, bumper stickers, key chains, etc. all with the new bi logocan be purchased at: <http://www.bicafe.com/BiMart/index.cfm>

The Bi Resource Center, as well as BiGear, also sell Bi items. You can find their web sites on my page [www.bisexual.org](http://www.bisexual.org) (commercial resources).

A community needs to be recognized through its symbols. Everyone now knows that the rainbow flag is a symbol for the lesbian/gay movement. In the same way, it is necessary for bisexuals to have their own symbols and not to "piggy back" on the gay movement. These two new bi symbols begin to answer this community's need.



- Fritz Klein

## Upcoming Conferences

### TRI-STATE CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED:

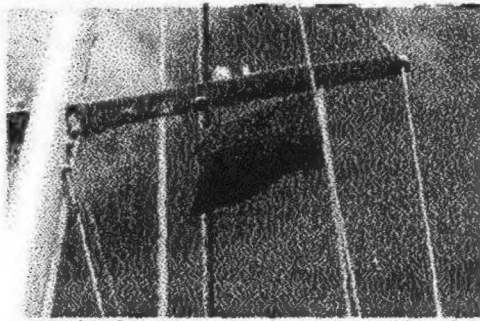
February 5-7, 1999 will be the dates of the next Tri-State Conference. It will be held in New Jersey on the Rutgers New Brunswick campus. The 2 1/2 day conference will include workshops, speakers, films, and panels; plus entertainment including a dance and a cabaret. The theme is "Beyond The Rainbow". The entire Tri-State (NJ/NY/CT) region as well as nearby Philly and Delaware folks are invited. For more information, email [bi99@biconf.org](mailto:bi99@biconf.org), visit our web site at <http://www.biconf.org>, or write to TBC '99, 13 Dartmouth Ave Apt 3B, Bridgewater, NJ 08807-3420 or call 732-246-3769. This is our biggest event in our region: Don't miss it!

"Out on the Prairie" a conference on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender issues in rural areas.

June 24-26, 1999 at the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota

"Out On The Prairie", scheduled for June 24-26, 1999, seeks to bring together social workers and others from the helping professions in addition to students and the public to explore the unique challenges faced by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals and their families living in rural areas. This three day conference, hosted by the Social Work Department at the University of North Dakota, is directed toward these individuals, their families and practitioners who work, live, or provide services in rural areas. For information on presenting or participating contact: Nancy Rice, Dept of Social Work, UND PO Box 7135 Grand Forks, ND 58202  
701-777-3770 Or 877-688-3660 (toll free)

## **The BiPride Flag: Bi Visibility!**



**BiPride Colors: Magenta, Lavender and Royal.**

**Coming soon to a BiPride Event, BiConference, Protest, Party, Demonstration, Bi Web Site, GLBT Community Center, Pride Store or Celebration near YOU!**

**BiPride Flags and gift items may be purchased online at BiMart. <http://www.bicafe.com/bimart>**

**"Together, we can put the "B" in GLBT!"**

**The BiCafe: Where the *Invisible* become **VISIBLE!****



**The BiCafe is an OnLine Interactive BiCommunity, exclusively for Bisexual, BiCurious, and BiLoving Adults.**

**Personal Data Sheets incorporate **Clothed Photos**. If you elect to post clothed photos, you will have the ability to see other members photos. If not, you will see their Personal Data Sheets only.**

**5 distinct BiChat channels to keep your discussions focused, 9 exciting BiForums & Editorial menu with Images, Private Email to Valid email addresses, Screened members, and BiFriendly service and location listings, Bi Erotic stills, and a General Bisexual Information menu.**

**Your Privacy and Confidentiality are assured with me. My email address is [michaelpage@bicafe.com](mailto:michaelpage@bicafe.com)  
The Coffee Club, Inc. (954) 424-1824. Toll Free in The USA (888) 256-2704.**

**<http://www.bicafe.com>**



## Rita Hester, cont'd

### Media Chaos in Boston

Boston, MA - December 11, 1998 - A coalition of different communities united today in street protest action, denouncing recent press coverage from their local media sources and demanding and accuracy in reporting.

Gender activists, together with members of the bisexual, gay, and lesbian communities, joined with homeless rights advocates, advocates for social services, members of the Latino/Latina community, and advocates for communities of Color to protest recent news coverage by the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald, and Bay Windows. The joint protest by a united body of separate communities served to draw attention to the serious decay of news coverage in Boston.

"There's clearly a widespread feeling that most of the present media coverage in Boston is utterly worthless," explained David Rostcheck from the Bisexual Resource Center. "[The media] rattles on and on about Clinton and Lewinsky, as if anyone cared. Meanwhile, serious issues affecting our city get no coverage, or halfhearted cursory coverage, or are continuously reported with gross errors that never get corrected." The Bisexual Resource Center has recently helped launch a national response to the Christian Coalition's "ex-gay" ads.

Members of the transgendered and intersexed communities protested the poor media coverage of the recent killing of Rita Hester, a transgendered woman killed in an apparent hate crime - the fourth such killing in Boston in four years. Media coverage of the killing has been relentlessly derogatory and insensitive, calling the victim a "gay man", a "man who lived as a woman", a "mystery to many", and referring constantly to the victim as a male, though she had lived in as a woman for seven years, had never been known as a man in Boston, and was well known and liked in her Allston neighborhood.

Despite a storm of criticism leveled at the papers, they defended their labeling practice. Even the city's largest gay paper, Bay Windows, drew heavy

fire for its insensitive coverage - including pointed editorials articles from rival In Newsweekly.

Puerto Rican activists pointed to Herald articles they considered blatantly offensive. These articles condemned the possibility of Puerto Rican statehood, extensively deriding the Puerto Rican natives as impoverished and unable to learn English.

Activists for the homeless and for social programs described the lack of substantive news coverage given to the December welfare deadlines that cut aid to 4,000 Massachusetts women and children

Activists for the rights of people of color spoke about Mumia Abu Jmal, a one-time member of the Black Panthers who faces the death penalty for what many believe to be a trumped-up case. Members of the African-American community consider Jmal to be a political prisoner.

The speakers included Nancy Nangeroni (the host of GenderTalk Radio on WMBR 88.1), Kazi Toure for the Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Chris Sterling representing Queer Revolt, Lorenzo A. Rossello for the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and POW's, and Leah Eckelberger from A Slice of Rice. The Truth Rally was sponsored by Tse (Two-Spirit Education, TLBG Prisoner support), Queer Revolt, the Lesbian Avengers, SOUL (Students Organizing for Unity and Liberation), M.O.C.A.A., It's Time Massachusetts!, Boston Chapter of National Peoples Campaign and other organizations.

Boston activists declared the rally the beginning of a new city-wide collaboration between previously separated communities in support of each other's issues. "The importance of the rally was that it was a learning experience for all." declared human rights activist Justice Williams. We were able to unite under one issue that effects us all, the media. Now that we got the ball rolling we will be continuing this coalition - I believe that we have become a force to reckon with."

### Troubling coverage: Response Letter

Although we appreciated the fact that you provided coverage of Rita Hester's murder, we were troubled by some aspects of this coverage that were disrespectful to both Rita and the larger gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community.

Your coverage included stories about the community meeting following Rita's murder, the vigil that was held to honor her, and comments from families and friends mourning the loss of a bright, giving, and life-filled person. This type of coverage was both important and sensitive as it highlighted the loss of a member of our community and discussed ways that we came together to mourn and heal.

However, in following the Associated Press style of referring to transgender people by the gender on their birth certificate, you deeply offended many members of our community and chose to ignore the fact that words have tremendous power. Each day, we work with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people who could tell you about the power of inaccurate and even hateful words and labels. The impact that such words have on people's lives- fear, shame, self-hatred, and feelings of insecurity are deep and lasting. Whether intended or not, such words can and do contribute to a climate of misunderstanding, and intolerance.

And it is such misunderstanding and intolerance that feeds a society that disrespects us, shames us, and, all too often, kills us. As we continue to educate those professionals we come in contact with about the power of words, and as we work with the appropriate authorities to ensure that Rita's murderer is found and brought to justice, we hope that your coverage will bring respect to her memory and sensitivity to our greater community.

Joyce Collier, Jose Pares-Avila, Emily Pitt, Dave Shannon

Violence Recovery Program  
Fenway Community Health Center  
Boston

- Bay Windows, Dec 23, 1998



# Bisexual/Transgender News

## Portland, OR Protects Transgenders

The City Council of Portland, Oregon on December 23 unanimously adopted a resolution against discrimination in city employment based on "gender identity," defined as "a person's actual or perceived sex, and includes a person's identity, appearance, or behavior, whether or not that identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with a person's sex at birth." Director of the transgender civil rights group It's Time, Oregon! Lori Buckwalter noted that the resolution was not just a general statement of support, but contains specific proposals designed to create a workplace which will be both practical and a model for private employers.

Among those proposals are inclusion of gender identity in city agencies' non-discrimination guidelines, expansion of mediation services to resolve gender identity-based employment discrimination complaints, research into health insurance options to meet the needs of transgendered and transsexual people, and research into the possibility of expanding city equal employment opportunity certification programs to include gender identity. Noting that much remains to be done, Buckwalter said that "this resolution creates a tangible prospect that we can cooperate to dispel decades of misunderstanding, and make a real difference in people's lives. Portland is now a place of unique opportunity to start this important work."

## Villagers Oust Transsexual German Mayor December 1, 1998

QUELLENDORF, Germany -- By better than a 2-1 majority, residents of the tiny German village of Quellendorf in eastern Saxony have voted to turn their mayor out of office for announcing he intended to dress as a woman and eventually undergo a sex-change operation.

Mayor says her defeat shows a

lack of tolerance.

Michael Lindner, now Michaela, was elected to a seven-year term in 1996. She has attracted transsexual support from all over Europe and several raucous rallies were held on the eve of the village vote to generate support. The rally dominated the village of little more than 1,000 residents and was covered by news media from all over the continent.

## HRC PASSES RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT TRANS ISSUES

[Washington, D.C.: 9 Dec 98] THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN (HRC), passed a resolution at their quarterly board meeting this weekend expressing support for measures that counteract discrimination based on gender identity.

"The Human Rights Campaign strongly supports public and private initiatives that counter discrimination based on real or perceived gender identity. We acknowledge the extraordinary work of transgender organizations and leaders and view them as important friends and powerful allies. [HRC] is committed to a mutually beneficial relationship with the transgender community. It is our hope that such a relationship will help inform and craft a shared vision of a world that honors and respects all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

## TOLEDO, OH ADOPTS RIGHTS-NewsPlanet Friday, December 11

SUMMARY: Months of hard work by activists yielded a unanimous vote by the Ohio city's council to recognize L/G/B/Ts as human under the law.

The Toledo, Ohio City Council on December 8 unanimously (with one absence) added sexual orientation as a protected category under the local human rights law. Transgendered people are also protected, since the measure defines sexual orientation as "real or perceived heterosexuality, homo-

sexuality, bisexuality, or gender identity." The existing ordinance made it a first-degree misdemeanor to discriminate in areas of employment, housing and public accommodations on the basis race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, handicap, and age. The new amendment added a section to also prohibit "intimidation" based on any of the categories, defined as a crime committed against a person or group because of bias. Mayor Carleton Finkbeiner is expected to sign the bill into law, which will make Toledo the eleventh Ohio municipality to ban anti-gay discrimination.

## Tyra Hunter's Jury Returns NewsPlanet Monday, December 14

A jury has found that ambulance technicians and hospital staff "joked" a severely injured Washington, DC transperson to death.

Transgender hairdresser Tyra "Tyra" Hunter's 1995 death might have been prevented with better treatment, and her final hours included suffering from human rights violations, a Washington, DC Superior Court jury decided December 11, awarding Hunter's mother, Margie Hunter, a total of \$2.9-million.

## Britain to Pay for T\* Surgery NewsPlanet Tuesday, December 22

When a local National Health Service authority tried to minimize the overriding clinical need" for 3 transgendered people's surgery, they went to court and proved the policy was "unlawful and irrational."

Britain's High Court ruled December 21 that a local authority of the National Health Service must pay for sex reassignment surgery for three transgendered people. The decision in this test case has national implications, but because it's the first case to thoroughly examine the question, the defendant health authority is seeking to appeal.

# Bisexual Response Ad Takes Off!

In the summer of 1998, a number of right-wing groups around the country launched an ominous new campaign to convince the U.S. that homosexuality is wrong and that bisexuality does not exist. This coalition of groups started with full-page newspaper ads in papers such as USA Today, the New York Times, and others, and has now moved on to television spots as well as workshops in public schools.

These conservative Christian ads show pictures of married opposite-sex couples or women with wedding rings, and carry text arguing that same-sex desires are unnatural, caused by abusive parents, and contrary to the will of God. The ads encourage people to contact the organizations to join "reparative therapy" groups, in which persons with same-sex desires will be given gender training (football lessons for men, makeovers for women) and same-sex aversion therapy, so that (the Christian leaders claim) they will become the heterosexual, gender-conforming people God supposedly wants them to be.

A long-term bisexual activist, Lani Ka'ahumanu, decided that the bisexual community needed to form its own national response to these damaging ads. The bisexual community is the primary target of the conservative Christian programs; many "graduates" of the Christian programs admit that they still have same-sex desires, but state that they have found happiness in opposite-sex relationships. Essentially, the Christian programs argue that they have converted bisexuals to "heterosexuality" just because they have entered monogamous opposite-sex relationships, even though the "converts" admit that their sexual orientation is still towards more than

one gender. The Christians are supporting the same myth that pervades so much of our culture - that in order to be bisexual you have to be sleeping with someone of each gender 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and if not, you must have "slipped" into the heterosexual or gay/lesbian "camps".

A coalition of bisexual activists and organizations, including BiNet USA, got together to create our own bisexual-positive ads that counters the myths about bisexuality perpetuated by the conservative Christian ads. Our ad argues that everyone - heterosexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgendered - deserves love and equal protection under the law regardless of whom they choose to love. The ad was published initially in Anything That Moves magazine as a pull-out poster, with permission to any bisexual or bisexual-friendly group to reprint it as part of local and national news advertising.

The press campaign that accompanied the ad has been overwhelmingly successful. Our campaign has been covered in such notable gay papers as the Washington Blade, Bay Windows in Boston, and the Bay Area Reporter in Northern California, and has been featured on radio programs such as LesBiGay Radio in Chicago and GenderTalk in Massachusetts. Many organizations

have contacted us about reprinting the ad and there has been an outpouring of interest in bisexual issues as a result of the publicity generated by the ad. Most importantly, a diverse and accurate picture of bisexuality is now out in the national media, educating heterosexual, gay, and lesbian people alike that bisexuals exist and deserve community attention.

To view the ad and learn more about the campaign, find a web browser and go to the site <http://www.anythingthatmoves.com/reaction>. If you are interested in becoming involved in the press campaign, want more details, or do not have access to the World Wide Web, contact me directly at [hfranek@carleton.edu](mailto:hfranek@carleton.edu) or 415-626-5550 Ext. 126. We have people working on the campaign all over the country and I will be happy to put you in touch with other people in your area who are interested in the campaign.

Celebrate bisexuality! As those of you reading this newsletter know, our bisexuality is a fundamental and sacred part of ourselves, and true spiritual depth comes in celebrating ourselves for who we really are.

- Heather Franek,  
Ad Campaign Coordinator

## Datalounge Internet Survey

I consider bisexuals to be an integral part of the gay community's goals and concerns.

- Strongly Agree 30.5%
- Agree 40.2%
- Unsure 14.0%
- Disagree 11.0%
- Strongly Disagree 4.3%



**EBAH** (cont'd from page 1)

and by the progress groups have made with advancing pro-BTLG legislation at the state and local level."

"The Equality Begins at Home events will be a watershed moment for our movement. Never before have state organizations come together to organize a coordinated series of actions to advance BTLG equal rights," stated Paula Ettelbrick, National Coordinator for EBAH.

The need for the Federation grew out of meetings of statewide activists occurring at NGLTF's **annual Creating Change Conference** in 1996. NGLTF serves as the Federation's coordinator to support the work and resources of the Federation. NGLTF took the extraordinary step of endowing coalition with a grant of \$5,000 to help insure the success of EBAH.

"States are ground zero in the struggle for equality and justice, and it is essential that these state groups are supported if we are to ensure our ultimate success as a movement. NGLTF is honored to assist in the ongoing activities of the Federation," said NGLTF Executive Director **Kerry Lobel**.

(To find more information please visit the web site: [equalitybeginsathome.org](http://equalitybeginsathome.org))

**Local EBAH Actions**

**Nebraska:** Equality Begins - in Nebraska!

Nebraska has embraced the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's (NGLTF) idea for Equality Begins at Home week in a big way. Plans center around two fundamentals, a statewide demonstration of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender pride and outreach to state legislators to enact appropriate civil rights legislation to protect their glbt constituents. Organizers are also using the opportunity to improve involvement by glbt people in areas

away from the two largest cities - Omaha and Lincoln, the capital.

NGLTF envisioned a coordinated, 50-state action to kick things off just before the change of the century. This action was based around the idea that the most effective actions have been at the state level, rather than the national level. They took the idea to their Policy Roundtable in 1998. The

Because our children are taken away.  
Because we lose our jobs.  
Because the courts do not protect us:  
Simply for who we LOVE.

Because we are viciously attacked;  
Because we are arrested;  
Because we are refused basic human rights  
as enshrined in the United Nations  
Declaration of Human Rights:  
Simply for who we ARE.

Because we are ridiculed in school;  
Because we are scorned in Congress;  
Because we lose our lives:  
Simply for how we LIVE.

Because we are allies;  
Because we live in Maryland;  
Because we work for Justice, Equality,  
Dignity, and Human Rights.  
Simply because  
**EQUALITY BEGINS AT HOME**  
- Maryland EBAH Statement

Policy Roundtable, made us of representatives of glbt groups across the nation, endorsed the idea and agreed to support it in their organizations. BiNet USA, one of the member groups, has made a significant commitment to making this happen and BiNet leaders are taking part in state planning committees across the nation.

In Nebraska, the 10-person planning committee is lead by Citizens for Equal Protection, and also includes members from P-FLAG, two college GLBT groups, the Rainbow Outreach Center, and 4 bisexuals - including the

resident BiNet USA National Coordinator and Regional Organizer. The result has been a plan that is broad and inclusive in its scope.

The current agenda includes not only the March 21 - 27 Equality Begins At Home week, but activities throughout the month of March. Grant funding was received which will be used, in part, to bring the Family Portrait Project and the NAMES Quilt to Nebraska for a tour of college campuses throughout the state, winding up in Lincoln for a week-long display in the Capitol. We will also have glbt people throughout the state

gathering employment nondiscrimination statements from businesses they work with and do business with. Nebraska has never been able to get an ENDA-type law out of committee, but it is hoped that statements like this will provide incentive to lawmakers as well as protection to GLBT people living and working here.

The Week itself is being billed as a "family" gathering. The actual

week festivities include:

**Sun** - "Family" church day

**Mon** - Ribbon cutting by governor\* of display

of NAMES

Quilt and Family Portrait project

**Tues** - Youth Day activities culminating in an alcohol free party

**Wed** - Bi Day including Biphobia makes me blue" pins with bisexuals across the state wearing blue (or lavender)

Afternoon - A speaker

**Thurs** - GLBT people from across the state will travel openly in caravan to Lincoln for weekend activities

Morning - Lobby training

Afternoon - GLBT will lobby

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

their state legislators for legal protection under the law, copies of employment nondiscrimination statements will be given to lawmakers

Evening - "Family" reunion and potluck

Fri -Afternoon - Rally on capitol steps, keynote speaker

Evening - Party

Sat - Morning - "Family" brunch

Afternoon - "Family" day at the zoo

\*We do not expect the governor to accept, but will offer him the opportunity to join in....

Nebraska is very excited about the potential of this week and the weeks leading up to it. States throughout the country and planning actions of their own and bi people should be part of the planning and the participation. It's a wonderful chance to be visible and to improve our legal standing throughout the country.

**Colorado:** So far, BiNet Colorado is working with Equality Colorado to piggyback on any and all events that are already scheduled. We haven't decided to do a bi day but we will be doing "biphobia makes me blue" whenever we can all week, encouraging everyone to wear blue, dye some part of their body or hair blue, etc. I'm going to contact some of the local queer-owned bars and cafes and request "blue plate" specials all week.

The tentative schedule for general events are:

Sunday, March 21: EBAH kickoff rally by glbtq youth on the steps of the state capitol, followed by youth lobby training session and party. Religious organizations statewide to talk about glbt issues in services, advertisement in support of glbt persons endorsed by various religious organizations, education hour on glbt issues.

Monday, March 22: Youth lobby day at the state capital

Tuesday, March 23: The "love project" 100 portraits of glbt couples and families that include photo, family description and benefits and rights not re-

ceived by glbt people. portraits will be placed on every legislators desk.

Wednesday, March 24: Coordinated action at county clerk offices to obtain marriage licenses

Thursday, March 25: "Thursday in black" bringing an awareness about violence within and towards

our community. Ask service providers to do in-service training on glbt issues. "clothesline project" on steps of state capitol to visibly demonstrate hate violence

Friday, March 26: A day of "no hate" in schools and universities across the state. students and faculty will be asked to wear buttons with the universal symbol for no hate. Public service announcements to be read over pa system in participating schools.

**Iowa:** The most recent plan for Iowa's EBAH activities includes a Lobby day, a Youth Lobby day, a Spirituality Forum, and are attempting to set up five regional activities throughout the state. Those will be organized by local activists. Contact Myke for details.

**Maryland:** In early December, Free State Maryland convened an ad-hoc group of activists to help coordinate Equality Begins at Home activities across the state of Maryland. This group created a mission statement and an endorsement process to support its efforts. The following document summarizes all of the activity of this ad-hoc committee to date, in that it describes the mission, summarizes the plans for EBAH, and then invites endorsement and specific action to support EBAH. BiNet's Deb Kolodny represented bi interests at the meeting, and sincerely hopes that Maryland Bis take the opportunity to create a bi specific event to support EBAH.

Join us in promoting Equality and Justice for all in Maryland Endorse Maryland Equality Begins at Home.

From March 21 to 27, we organize as LGBT communities and our allies in Maryland and throughout the United States to promote social, political, and economic justice:

Current plans for the week

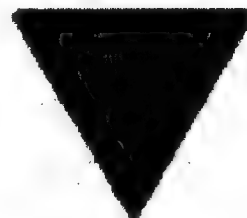
include a rally in Annapolis on Monday, March 22, followed by an evening of lobbying our state legislators and a day of state campus events. Possible events include an Interfaith Service and a Bisexual visibility event, and additional actions could unfold as the organizing progresses.

Additional ways endorsers can help make Maryland Equality Begins at Home a success:

- \* Advertise the week's events to your members
- \* Pledge to get at least 10 people to at least one event
- \* Send donations (any amount will help and will be much appreciated)
- \* Offer a speaker for a rally
- \* Hold an event meaningful to you, and tell us about it so we can put it on the calendar

Help us send a powerful message to our legislators and to the citizenry of Maryland this March....Equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender peoples, indeed for all peoples, begins at home!

**Florida:** GLBT people from across Florida will be in Tallahassee March 20 to 22 for a weekend of education, media events, and lobbying. There will be panel discussions, press briefings, speaker trainings, meetings with elected officials, workshops, and fun activities. Workshops are planned for Saturday, a rally and Youth Summit are scheduled for Sunday, and lobbying will be the focus on Monday. For general information, call Equality Florida at (813) 253-5962 or email eqfl@eqfl.org. To plan activities related to bisexuals, call Ann Schranz at (813) 986-5820 or email annschranz@aol.com.





# Creating Real Change

Each November the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force hosts Creating Change. This conference draws gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender organizers, activists, and other individuals and allies together to participate in workshops, panels, and discussion groups. It is also an opportunity to network and create strategies to protect and improve the lives of GLBT people. It is a wonderful forum and opportunity and a lot of good things have come from this annual meeting.

I first attended Creating Change in 1996 when it was held in Arlington, Virginia and I have attended twice since. That first experience, which was reported in BiNet News in early 1997 was the worst of times and the best of times. Bi and Trans people were ejected from workshops, their points of view were discredited from podia, groups refused to acknowledge the part that Bi and Trans people had played in their organization's history,

and, in general, bi and transphobia were rampant. But it was also the scene of great progress as bi leaders met with a White House liaison and a huge demonstration of bi and trans visibility was held at the plenary.

I was hesitant about what I would find at the 1997 conference in San Francisco, but it was obvious that the world had changed drastically during the preceding year. Bi and trans people were keynote speakers, presenters, and major participants at all levels. The conference was an affirmation of the changes that were being made in our community.

The conference in Pittsburgh in 1998 continued the wonderful trend that had been started. Bi and trans people were included at all levels and the Bisexual Resource Center was honored for the work they had done in the success of the International Bisexual Conference in Boston earlier in the year.

Several workshops focused on bi and trans issues exclusively. I never heard anyone say gay and lesbian without including bisexual and transgender. One young bi trans woman I know felt so affirmed by her experience at Creating Change that she didn't want to come home again!

We still have a long way to go. But it is gratifying to see change that results from the work that is being done. BiNet USA's work with other national groups, especially NGLTF, and our continued presence at the Creating Change conference and other national conferences throughout the country, has made lasting real change within the GLBT community. In 1999, Creating Change will be held in Oakland, California. It will be another great opportunity to create real change. Catch it if you can!

- Marcella Bucknum

## Yes, I want to join BiNet USA!

To: BiNetUSA  
4201 Wilson Blvd #110-311  
Arlington, VA 22203-1859

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Is discretion necessary? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Join on a 12 month membership at these levels and get these exciting benefits!

All membership levels enable the member to vote in elections and business meetings, plus they receive a yearly subscription to BiNet News!

- ☐ \$45 - Regular Membership + ATM + the BRG + Black Sheets for one year!
- ☐ \$35 - Regular Membership + ATM + the BRG!
- ☐ \$30 - Regular Membership + Anything That Moves for one year!
- ☐ \$25 - Regular Membership + the latest issue of the Bisexual Resource Guide!
- ☐ \$20 - Regular Membership

## Ad Hoc Committee Report

### March on Millennium

Move that BiNet USA decide that we will not endorse the March on the Millennium and:

1) Use MOM as a teach tool about how different groups organize differently.

2) Continue organizing BiNet USA

activities: visibility, education and

recruiting members in-building at the

April 30, 2000 MOM events and

3) Continue to participate in the Ad Hoc

Committee for an Open Process critique

which is developing a larger progressive

LGBT agenda for our movement

the March.

- BiNet Resolution on MOM

In an important step in our work, the Ad Hoc Committee for an Open Process brought our concerns about the Millennium March on Washington and the general state of the lgbt movement to the Creating Change conference in Pittsburgh over the weekend of Nov. 12th to the 15th.

The weekend began for us on Thursday (11/12/98) as 150 activists from the lgbt movement gathered in the national meeting we had organized. In the last six months, the Ad Hoc Committee had raised our criticisms of the top-down and closed doors methods of the groups which had initiated the MMOW: we brought a proposal for an open process to their invitation-only meeting in June; we gathered 300 signatures on a two page center-fold ad in the Washington Blade in mid-September; we organized public discussions in Boston, New York City, Albany, Washington, DC, & San Francisco; and we wrote articles and did interviews with media outlets. Several months ago we realized that the annual Creating Change conference organized by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force would give us an opportunity to talk to hundreds of

activists. We put out a call for our own meeting on November 12th and planned for three workshops at the conference.

During the Nov. 12th session

it was clear that the Ad Hoc Committee's call for a movement wide discussion about whether to march on Washington - and about the state of our movement - had struck a chord with organizers around the country. (For instance, BiNet USA came to Pittsburgh having just decided to not support the MMOW and to continue to be involved with the Ad Hoc Committee.) In a standing-room-only meeting at the Andy Warhol Museum an array of lgbt activists added their voices to the growing chorus urging a halt to the work on the MMOW and supporting the opening of the process. The problems with the MMOW were placed in a broader context as speaker after speaker addressed the need to redefine what movement is all about: both what we are fighting for and how we do our work. For instance, there was criticism of GLAAD's acceptance of \$110,000 from Coors and other examples of the "corporatization" of the movement.

The energy of the meeting carried into the weekend as hundreds of people participated in three workshops and several meetings organized by the Ad Hoc Committee at Creating Change. Throughout the conference the specific issues about the "Millennium March" and broader concerns about the direction of the lgbt movement were raised and debated. The NGLTF Board of Directors showed its concern about the MMOW by convening an open meeting to discuss NGLTF's relationship to the MMOW. A diverse group—including many young people—took up the Ad Hoc Committee's call and challenged NGLTF to leave the MMOW Board.

Above and beyond the specific content we brought to all of these discussions, perhaps most importantly the work we did in Pittsburgh opened up space for people to raise questions and articulate their own ideas. In workshops, in informal discussions, and in many of the plenary sessions' presentations people expressed their concerns about the

direction our movement has been moving in. For instance, there was widespread discussion about the need for the lgbt movement to include race, class and gender perspectives in our work and the need to understand our fight for sexual liberation as tied to other struggles for social and economic justice.

In addition to the sessions we organized, other meetings were pulled together. P-FLAG organizers from around the country responded to these issues by putting together a meeting on the spot and unanimously urged their national leadership to reconsider their participation on the MMOW board. Local P-FLAG chapters and members had not been consulted about their organization's involvement in the MMOW and activists urged their national organization to undertake an organization-wide discussion. (We have since learned that some of the materials from the Ad Hoc Committee are part of the discussion packets being sent to P-FLAG chapters.)

Youth activists took their own initiative and issued a public letter calling on the National Youth Advocacy Coalition and NGLTF to withdraw from the MMOW. The People of Color caucus that met throughout the weekend added their concerns and criticisms, also asking NGLTF to stand by our movement's principals of democracy and inclusivity by withdrawing from the MMOW.

Immediately following Pittsburgh, we sent a memo (along with our original proposal for an open process to determine whether or not our community wants to organize a march on Washington) to the two day meeting of the MMOW Board being held in Washington, DC on Nov. 17th and 18th. While we asked for a response as of the writing of this letter we still have not heard from the MMOW Board.

- From Ad Hoc Committee  
Mass Mailing, (Edited for space)



## Bi People

### Bi Café Birthday Bash

Our first year BiCafe Anniversary Party. On Dec 5th, here in beautiful Ft. Lauderdale, was a pleasant gathering of over 30 Bi People (bisexual, bi curious, bi loving and bi friendly). The Deck Restaurant and grounds were decorated with colorful BiPride Flags and gift items. We began gathering at about 5:00 and slowly settled down for our special "one and a half pound lobster dinner." The food was terrific and the wait staff went out of their way to take care of us. They even had flowers on the white table cloths that matched the BiPride Colors (magenta, lavender and royal).

As dinner was being served we were treated to the beautiful singing voice of one of our own members, Actor225. After a couple of Broadway Show tunes, we began to feel nostalgic for New York. Thanks for establishing the upbeat party atmosphere Actor225!

As dinner came to a close, I took the opportunity to talk about the 3 purposes for the celebration. First was the BiCafe Anniversary -- we've come a long way in a short period of time! Congratulations to everyone!! Second,

handsome Dr.FritzKlein1594 and I spoke on behalf of BiNet USA. I read their mission statement. Fritz assured us that BiNet is an important part of the Bi Movement. Thanks to all those that helped by making contributions through BiPride Flag sales and contributions. We raised a total of \$110.00. We hope many who picked up the BiNet flyer will decide to join. Thirdly, I had the pleasure of introducing the BiPride Flag. The concept was brought to life jointly bi Allfrynds1042 and yours truly! All indications are that the beautiful flag will become an integral and key element in The Bi Movement. The flag may be purchased soon at Bi-Mart -- The BiCafe's Online store for Bi People.

Then I got to make good on my surprise -- the reason for the cameras. I had a beautiful sexy young lady named Desere posing nude in one of the adjoining Hotel Rooms. Photos were snapped bi party goers who entered one and two at a time (except for Elektra1592 and jdstls1235, who somehow managed to miss out on the female half of the show). Not to offset the balance, our young handsome model David proudly posed his bare sculpted

body to the beat of Sash (thanks trashkitten990 and beachbum1006). Once developed on Friday, they will be posted as the December Photo Shoot!

A live DJ carried us joyously into the night as Bi People met Bi People and friendships were made (and Actor225 split his pants dancing!). I hope all had as nice a time as I did. I look forward to our next social /non-sexual (save that for the new bi friends you make)/ fun with an erotic twist/ gathering!

Special thanks also to attending BiCafe members BiManMD950 (our long distance attendee -- Maryland! And now he will have clothed photos!!), blueferal478 (our knowledgeable and highly recommended marketing talent), AmazonWoman552 (founder of The Bi-Symbol -- looking slim and sexy!), Adam727 (a natural born photographer!), Cathy of Cathy&John280 (another natural

born photographer!), Boy-Toy1595 (always a joy to spend time with you!), Fred379 (the future first Bi President of the United States!), and Tarzan1144 (you missed all the festivities!).

- Michael Page, Bi Café

### BiWest/SoCal Bi Conference: Masquerade Ball(Oct 24,



## Regional News

### Midwest News:

It's finally gotten cold! I hope everyone has their long johns on. Our states are busy gearing up for EBAH in March and BECAUSE in April. If you would like to be involved in EBAH or BECAUSE planning, good! We need you! Please contact Myke or I for more information.

In case you didn't notice, my name is Terri Ann. I'm the newer of the Midwest RO's. I was appointed back in November. I operate out of Omaha. Please email/snail mail/call me and let me know you're out there. Are you sharing your newsletter with someone? Do you belong to an organization? Are you all alone on the prairie? Get ahold of me. I love to hear from our MidWest Bis.

Organizers from the Midwest and Central Regions met at the Leadership Retreat in November where a discussion of regional boundaries was started. It was agreed Missouri would be better served by the Midwest and that U.P. Michigan and Wisconsin would connect more with Central. The main reasons for this were geographic and cultural. It was also noted that this would unite all of Kansas City and all of Michigan. The regional realignment was proposed to the delegate body present which reached consensus to approve the switch. The representatives from Midwest and Central Regions are excited about the new additions to their regions and hope members in the involved states will be too. Expect great things in '99! There are tentative plans for groups from Columbia, MO, Omaha, and Kansas City to get together in KC in February. More details to come.

While writing this I'm trying to decide on whether I should go to a big New Year's Eve bash this evening or go home, curl up with the cat and crash at 10p. I'm feeling grinchy. What do you think? That's all from snowy Omaha. Happy New Year! Happy Valentine's

Day! Don't forget - Bi Coming Out Day is Feb. 14. Mark your calendars and tell the neighbors!

-Terri Ann

The Midwest Region will hold its third annual Leadership Retreat during the first weekend of February. The Leadership Retreat is a time for members to set the direction for the region. The weekend will include setting goals and creating processes to reach those goals. Of course, there is plenty of time for social activities as well. In the past, we have gone dancing, met Bud the Cow, and watched bi-themed movies. Additionally, this year's retreat marks the first anniversary of the Midwestern Bisexual Alliance, Inc.

This has been a challenging year for the Midwestern Bisexual Alliance. Like many new organizations, we have felt some growing pains. Several of the board members have had to step down from their positions for various reasons. It is always hard to lose leaders who provide vision, energy, and spirit.

To make the Leadership Retreat more accessible, the Midwestern Bisexual Alliance, Inc. is paying the lodging for two representatives from each of our regional states. If you are interested in attending or have questions, feel free to contact Myke Selha at [bimyke@hotmail.com](mailto:bimyke@hotmail.com), (515)233-8375, or 105 Jewel Dr. #4, Ames, IA 50010.

-Myke

### Tri-State News:

There is a lot of stuff going on here in NYC for Bi's. We have a new Bisexual Wommin of Color group called the House Of Anjea. There is an upcoming conference called Pa'fuera Pa' lante in the next two months and I will be facilitating Where is the B in the Latino/a Queer community. We are also looking forward to the Tristate meeting at Rutgers University. So New Yorkers are gonna be in the house. There is also a Bisexual Youth group at a youth center called the New Neutral Zone. The group is called Bi Any Other Name. It's the only group in NYC.

- Peace Penelope

On Sat, Nov 7, Tom Limoncelli did a "Bi 101" workshop for all the new volunteers at GAAMC's new volunteer session. GAAMC is the state's oldest and largest G/L/B/T organization. Volunteers were being trained to staff their help line, their youth group, and other functions. We thank GAAMC for the opportunity and look forward to participating in future sessions.

-Tom

### MidAtlantic News:

Well, the Mid-Atlantic region is off to a great start with a new crew of volunteers. Many thanks to the many efforts of previous RO's Debra Kolodny and Marly Davidson in getting us off on the right foot. Not only are Deb and Marly proving to be good mentors, but they created a great deal of momentum in the organization during their turn as RO's. The new volunteers include Julie Walko and J Fields, RO's; Gar Young, Treasurer; and David Grenham and Erin Demuth who have volunteered to help plan the Fall 99 retreat.

The religious retreat location we used for last year's retreat ran into uncertain difficulties and won't be accommodating us again. We are currently seeking a new location for next year's retreat.

Many of us attended the Matthew Shepard rally on the steps of the nation's Capitol, and later attended the memorial service at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church. Unfortunately, the sermon did not include bisexuals when listing queer sexual orientations and there was not a unified bisexual presence. Hopefully, with the visibility that BiNet USA leaders are striving for, this will be more likely at future events.

Marly Davidson, Rochelle Spiker, and J Fields were invited to speak at Interweave, a Unitarian gay & lesbian organization that is one of our allies. It was good public speaking experience, and the audience was genuinely interested in Bi issues. One of their members even "outed" them self as Bi.

We look forward to more opportunities such as this to spread the word!

(Continued on page 31)

## Bi "Families"

### What is the Bisexual Definition of Family? By Jon Spinner

I think many of us are attracted to Bisexuality because we like the fluidity. For some people it may erode the borders of sexual orientation, for some gender. I suspect that for most of us it has profoundly affected what our view of a "family" is.

My first sexual experiences were as a boy and they were with other boys. Later, as I moved on to college, I started to have sexual experiences with women. After graduation I came to the conclusion that either relationship was viable for me. In my experience, a person's sexual plumbing doesn't seem to matter. You can always work some-

thing out. As for more emotional aspects, modern culture insists that friendship is now an important factor in establishing an intimate relationship. Behaving this way I noticed that there was no difference in the quality or nature of my friendships with women versus those with men. So that didn't seem to be a segregating factor.

Socially I've always been a bit independent. So public sanction for a same-sex partner never intimidated me. The flip side of this also applies. I have never felt the need for a formal societal justification of my relationship. I am also a child of divorced parents and I have experienced family relationships from two parents, to single parents, to parents living with companions, to re-

married step families. I have valued all of them tremendously but I have seen nothing that recommends one above another. Barring a convincing argument from a mate, I will not get married. This has caused remarkably few problems so far. The main exception being insurance. Currently the university I work at does not provide domestic partner benefits and the state of Missouri does not recognize Common Law partnerships. So my partner dwells in American society's health care gap.

As I have gotten more involved in the Bisexual community I've also stumbled into the BDSM, or Leather, community. From my experience the two communities overlap to

*(Continued on page 18)*

### Family - Are You Sure I Only Get 500 Words? By Terri Ann

Family. What an awesome concept and such an integral part of my life. It's difficult to figure out where to begin. Do I start with my extended given family? My smaller chosen family? My family life as a single person? The family I hope to some day start? Do I write about my commitment to family above all else? How do I see family from the perspective of a Bi ac-

tivist? The facts: I am the oldest grandchild of a tight knit extended family of 19, which includes my grandparents, 7 children/spouses, and 10 grandchildren. I count about half as many in my 'chosen' family of good friends.

I put chosen family in quotes for a reason. Given the chance, I would choose my given family. For all their faults, short comings, and eccentricities, I could have done worse. To prove our fierce loyalty to the family, we have all chosen to live close to one

another. I'm the furthest out at 1/2 hour. (I've always been the independent one.) Some of us have moved away and chosen to come back.

I moved away for over 3 years. I needed to find out who I was outside the context of my family. Until then I was only the oldest child of the oldest child, namesake of my grandmother, expected to follow the family party line of conservative Catholicism. Moving away showed me how outgoing I was, how very liberal my politics

*(Continued on page 18)*

### My Family, by Wendy Curry

I first met Brian when I was 14. He was every girl's friend; I called him "Brother Brian." At 15, he was the first to tell me I deserved better than my abusive boyfriend. When I moved on, it was Brian who was there for me. A couple months later, 2 days after an almost kiss, and a week before my abortion, we finally got together.

We moved in together when I was 17, married at 18. The thirteen

years that followed have been your typical "white picket fence, coming out, being poly, having a triad, falling for another womyn, crashing-burning, trying monogamy, feeling penned in" story. You've seen it a million times. Hardly worth mentioning. ✓

Since I was a kid, I've been curious. I wanted to know how the telephone worked, where my place in the world is, how come my nipples harden when I hug Leann. I figure, the only way to learn is to experience

life.

Brian has this inner peace patience that lets him stay in one place. He knows that the world rotates every day... and if he stays true to himself, does his own thing, then eventually the entire world will come by. We balance each other, he and I. I keep him from boredom; he keeps me from prison.

I almost divorced him twice - once for personal reasons and once for political. The first was after an intense

*(Continued on page 18)*



*(Continued from page 17)*

varying degrees throughout the country. On the whole I think it is enough to recognize the Leather community as a "sister" community much as we do the Transgendered and Polyamorous communities. The greatest appeal for me in BDSM is that sexual activity and sexual roles are regarded with that same experimental playfulness that I remember having when I was young... probably the only "fun" thing about puberty. In BDSM the act of foreplay and intercourse is wrestled away from the societally appropriate domains of Romance,

Psychological Bonding, and Procreation and delivered into the hands of Lust, Play and Curiosity. Things I have done at fetish balls and play parties clearly pull some of my sexual behavior out of the private realm of my relationship with my partner.

Considering all of these factors, I'm not sure I can say what defines a family. When looking to define the term "family" from personal experience I look through my past and see myself sitting in hospitals next to blood relatives and close friends alike. I have shared rooms, apartments, and houses

with a wide assortment of people. I have communicated with and really shared my feelings with lovers and friends since I was a small boy. I have had sexual experiences inside and outside of relationships. Most importantly, I have shown no interest in "official" definitions from society as to what constitutes a family. What am I left with? At this point my partner and I are a family purely because that is what we agree we are. Society will have to learn to live with us.

*(Continued from page 17)*

were, and gave me the strength to come out as bisexual and pagan - things I'd known about myself for a long time.

Armed with new tools, I moved Home. I'm not out to my family, but then, they have always subscribed to a don't ask, don't tell policy. I think they've figured out I'm not Christian. I'm sure they have wondered at times if I was gay. As a Bi activist I feel we are all responsible for being as out as possible to further our goals of education and acceptance. As a daughter of conservatism I know how hard that can be.

It will probably be a while be-

fore I come out to my family unless I end up in the media during EBAH week! I see myself taking steps, though. I'm out as pagan to my mother. That went just fine. Now, I tackle the big one. I know she will keep loving me. We'll still be great friends, and I'll continue to go to her house for dinner. Coming out is scary, nonetheless. I can't imagine what a hard decision this would be for some one on more uncertain ground.

And, though I am a member of this large, loving family, I do not have a family of my own. I long to follow in the footsteps of my mother, aunts, and grandmother. I want to be a matriarch

leading her family through the years, martyring herself at every family function. I enjoy living with just my cat, having my freedom, and doing completely as I choose. I also hope for a confidante(s), a deep commitment, someone(s) to share my triumphs and tragedies.

What I can tell you about family is, I need it. I'm very lucky to have it. Whatever form it is in, whatever label I place on it, for me, it is a necessity. So, that is how I begin to tell my story of family.

Could I have another 10,000 words or so?

*(Continued from page 17)*

relationship with an amazing womyn. I was promising to be everything to two people - not an easy task.

The second near-divorce was in response to all the "heterosexist" press about marriage. I felt so guilty for being married. Hell! I felt downright ashamed. I'd either try to hide my marriage (wear a big ring above my wedding band) or feel I needed to explain it away by youthful ignorance. It seemed better if I got divorced and we redefined ourselves as partners. In trying to come up with the words to ex-

plain this to him, I knew there was no way I could do it without hurt. So, I made the bravest, politically incorrect decision in my life - by keeping with the oldest tradition of all. I love him more than I care about how others perceive me.

On the polyamory/monogamy scene, we have no label. It been two and a half years since I've been with another person. Some might call that monogamy. I've had other partners during our marriage. Some might call that polyamory. But neither definition seems to cover it. I'm think-

ing about creating a Klein scale for -ogamy's. The geek in me loves the idea of defining our relationship as a number.

Here's the closest I can get to a description. Brian is a supportive, loving, respect rules, mate for life, only have eyes for you sort of guy. I'm a take on the world, support each other's individuality, detest rules, nonmonogamous flirt. Each day we make a conscious decision to be together. The rest is negotiable.

## Bi Families, cont'd..

### I Love You, and I Love You Too

by Ron Owen

It was the most exciting and important day of my life as I stood there with Peter and Leonie in front of about 150 friends and we took turns sharing our commitments vows with each other. We had not spoken our individual vows to each other prior to the union ceremony in Marina Del Rey, California, January 12, 1991. Our vows were new to us and our witnesses but one phrase we had agreed on prior was that each of us would end with, "I love you, and I love you too." looking in turn at each of our two life partners. Our first child, Chad was born nine months (and six days) later. Our daughter Ariana was born June 13, 1996.

How is it that three people came together, fell in love, and formed a bipolifidelitous triad? For me, it began in college, at UCLA, when I finally came to understand the duality of my feelings, my attraction to both sexes. I searched and found no examples or models for my ideal family. I became very involved in ARETE (the LA bi group from the 70's and 80's) after grad school and in January 1981 I met Peter at a party for EST (if any of you remember Warner Erhardt?) practitioners after being introduced by a mutual friend from ARETE.

In addition to our mutual attraction, we had a mutual desire, to create a family with another man and

woman (or possibly two women) and to have children together. We have been together since that night and we shared with all our friends that our intention was to have a family. We were blessed to meet a beautiful woman, Leonie, while at an annual conference held in Scottsdale Arizona every summer. Leonie was at the conference in 1990, after traveling from her home of Perth in Western Australia. On a day trip to Jerome, AZ, she was sitting behind us. She says her first thought was that we were a gay couple and yet by the end of the conference she and Peter were feeling an attraction for each other. I had returned a week earlier for work.

Peter came back from the conference with Leonie and they shared their feelings for each other and I decided then that I wanted to see if this was what we had been searching for, for nine years. I fell in love with Leonie and she with me and Peter. I began to talk about having the union ceremony, but first, Peter and Leonie would legally marry in Las Vegas, as she is Australian and it is the only way for her to be here. Of course, we would have liked to all three be legally married but let's save that for another issue.

We now live in the burbs of Scottsdale, Chad is in first grade and is Passionate about soccer and also loves Stars Wars and playing with army men. Ariana at 2 and half keeps all three of us on our toes. Experiencing their untarnished love and enthusiasm for life is

a joy I can not express in words. Our close neighbors understand why there are three adults in the family and what it all means, but they have to ask first! Chad just made a new friend and I went to his house to meet his parents and the first thing the boy shouted out was "Chad has two dads!" without any judgement, just pure enthusiasm. And that is the way it should be!

### Misc Family Quotes

I am a monogamous bi who also considers herself to be a christian/agnostic, (don't strain on that one! ;-)) and wishes I had the energy, more of a society where I was taught to be poly, but have decided to leave it for another lifetime because as a person with a rather low libido which gets satisfied quite easily by just flirting most of the time, I find I really like being monogamous.

*I'm in a primary relationship w/ a man, but occasionally pursue relationships with other women and men outside my primary relationship. I'm bi, my partner is straight. He is also poly and is free to pursue other relationships.*

I am polyamorous, have known that I am emotionally polyamorous since I was eight, and am currently 'dating' two men. At various times I have been in a long-term primary relationship with a woman, a triad, and single/consciously celibate.

## Next Topic O' the Season: Activism in Cyberspace

Over the next few issues, we plan to spotlight each of the BiNet initiatives. The first focus will be on the TRI (technology resource initiative). BiNet News is accepting submissions regarding "all that is cyber." Are you a technophobe? Or a junkie? How has cyberspace altered your coming out process? How did the internet change the face of the bi community? Is activism different post-email? Does the increased reliance on email create a classist society? Submissions should be 500 words. They must be submitted electronically - via email (newsletter@binetusa.org) or mailed - (either typed/double spaced or PC

## A VISION: "Our" Place

Title: Should the Bisexual Movement be Part of the Lesbian and Gay Movement?

Presenters: **Deb Kolodny**, BiNet USA Advisory Board

Deb has been a Bi activist for 13 years, and an activist in the women's, faith, social justice, labor and LGBT movements for 20. She has served two terms as a National Coordinator for BiNet USA, and has been published in various and sundry places on the topic of Bisexuality. She is currently editing an anthology written by Bisexual People of Faith.

**Robyn Ochs**, Editor, Bisexual Resource Guide

Robyn Ochs is a long-time bi activist. She teaches courses at Tufts University on bisexual identities and on glb cultures in the US & Canada. This is her 5th Creating Change Conference.

**Tim Turner**, National Coordinator, BiNet USA National Coordinator

And allies:

**Lori Camargo**, LLEGO

**Cathy Renna**, Director of Community Relations, GLAAD

Description:

Veteran Bisexual organizers are joined by powerful Lesbian and Gay allies to discuss the intersections and points of departure of the Bisexual and the Lesbian and Gay Movements. While issues of inclusive language may be touched on, this workshop will explore much deeper questions which cause discomfort or even conflict between these movements, as well as the questions which transcend those differences.

Abstract:

Veteran Bisexual organizers, Robyn Ochs, Tim Turner, and Deb Kolodny are joined by Lesbian activist and GLAAD staff member, Cathy Renna and Lesbian and Gay activist Lori Camargo, representing LLEGO, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender Latino and Latina Organization in exploring how and when it is sensible for Bisexuals to work with the larger LGBT movement. They will also discuss the realm of work which Bisexual activists feel belongs squarely outside of the LGBT rubric.

Panelist will explore questions like:

- Does the Bisexual agenda track in lock step with the larger Lesbian and Gay Movement?
- Is there even a monolithic Lesbian and Gay Movement to track with?
- What is the significance of the bi-gendered, feminist leadership within the Bi Movement? What is the impact of LGBT organizations using inclusive language when Bisexual constituents are not listened to, served or understood? Under what circumstances do Bisexual activists want to work with the LG movement?
- What unique power, insight, or possibility does the Bisexual Movement bring to the larger LGBT Movement?

*In the present wave of "queer" politics and coalition building, we, as the "Bisexual" community are seeking a place in this movement as a viable, diverse and educational body in a force we refer to as the "movement". At the recent Creating Change 98 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I was fortunate enough to be on a panel entitled "Should the Bisexual Movement be a Part of the Lesbian & Gay Movement?" Wow, talk about a loaded question!*

*My initial answer to the panel question is: "No, but sort of." In an era*

*of polarized politics that tease moderates by shifting in and out of centrist views we have a rare opportunity. Where as the Gay and Lesbian Community represents a "Leftist" appearing agenda. And the opposition groups such as the Christian Coalition represent the "Rightist" agenda of a moral center" (interesting how they use "center in a rightist agenda), we "area" the center. We, as a "Bisexual" community come from all walks of life, all agendas, all areas, all social classes, and encompass a most diverse commu-*

*nity of deviation, have a rare opportunity to provide a forum for an active discussion on the question of gender and sexuality.*

*The following is from my statement on the panel at Creating Change 1998:*

*As a movement, we as the "Bisexual" community need to move from the notion of "inclusion" to an intention of "recognition". Although inclusion bi all means is extremely important, our intentions must be fully realized to understand its implications. Many feel we are "latching" on to a community that is not our own. In many ways, this is a tangible argument.*

*I feel we should move to "our" space to remain an active and viable bridge. Representing the center of the spectrum of sexuality, I envision an opportunity to expand our contingency by lengthening the bridge and its span, along the spectrum of sexual diversity, in both directions from "our" place in the center.*

*We must continue to develop and nurture relationships with the polarities. As the Gay & Lesbian movement expands their contingency and vision they will meet us in a new place. As the Heterosexual community is educated and opens up to the notion of sexual diversity, they too will meet us in a new place.*

*By actively forming coalitions, realizing our place in the global question of universal equality, providing education, developing communities, facilitating strength, renewing and encouraging diversity, promoting a forum for discussion, and visually representing our diverse sexual culture in its society of subsets, we can expand our bridge and create the place where our discussion of equality can be nurtured, developed, and realized.*

*Finding "our" place does not*

*(Continued on page 31)*



## Binet Retreat/Silence

The BiNet retreat was a first for me. I met people I only heard of I put names to faces and regions. I must say that this retreat was not all business (well, accept after hours and I can't indulge, I wasn't there, really). This retreat to me had a purpose to get to know each other and learn about why each of us was there. As for me, I got to learn a lot about BiNet and understand my role as a Regional Organizer for BiNet. I also found out that being an organization that communicates online and telephone. We have differences and different personalities that we can now put a face to. Therefore because of our differences I felt that it is forgotten that though we are in a minority (aside from the fact that we are Bi identified) there is still diversity within BiNet. Though there may not be large number of people of color, differently abled people, people who have myriad ways of speaking. We are still within BiNet.

I would like to share my feelings about one out of many experiences I had at the retreat. This is an experience that will always be a part of me. These were very enlightening experiences though at times painful. The people that I meet were priceless and the experiences were too.

I write about censorship, a right to speak not the privilege and recognizing. 3 womyn of color and one speaks her mind through censorship and fear of being silenced. But how can this be don't I have the right not the privilege to speak. Now I ask did you or do you recognize? I in the middle of

the room with my sistas, my strong sistas of color glowing in my peripheral, surrounded by white comrades who wish to tiptoe pass taboos. I, in the middle of no where, surrounded by trees. A note of a song lingers in my mind .... "strange fruit bearing" ... Sing it Nina for your the only one in Carnegie Hall, sing it, Billie your the only Bi with a flower in your hair. And I'm the only one in a room full of white comrades standing alone with my sistas of color still standing strong. "You got my back kid." " Word is life, Son I gotcha back." " There's no question Son, none."

Yes, I bring taboos to the light where others fail to see, who'd rather tiptoe than stomp. I am a LesBiAn womyn of color, Black Latina to be precise. And when others fail to recognize when their privilege makes them blind, my sistas still glowing not far from sight. And when it seems that I fail to respond my sista speaks and it cuts like a knife the taboos we all seem to want to tiptoe past at night. So I ask you again do you recognize?

Cause I can never fail to recognize that when I am censored it stings, when my language is silenced I fail to exist. However I recognize that in this day and time I have the right not the privilege to speak my mind in any language that I wish. You see I speak 5 different kinds of English, are you still gonna shut it down even if you don't understand. "Boo," that's your problem not mine.

Though knowing all of that a chill still rose up my back. Because I

was still one of three womyn of color, who speaks 5 different kinds of English and Spanish. I was still in a "progressive" room surrounded by white comrades. I was still silenced and censored. Even through the chill's (that will always come back, when will they stop?) I will stand strong and will continuously speak my mind through being silenced, censored and other's people problems. This moment passes the chill disappear and the thoughts still linger. I am back in a room with my sista's of color eva' glowing, knowing allies and tired comrades who wish to sleep. As they tiptoe past taboos that they do not wish to face, must recognize that diversity is here.

No one can deny it's rightful place. No one can censor, block, standardize or silence it. Just let it through just like you say you want it to.

Soy una mujer de color. Mis sentimientos, mis ideas, mi voz te habla muy diferente. Pero al fin todo es igual. Tenemos una causa comun. Comunicando en lenguajes, voces, ideas no como la tuya pero sin embargo similares.

- En Paz Penelope

I am a womyn of color. My feelings, my ideas, my voice speak to you very differently. However in the end everything is the same. We all have a common cause. Communicating in languages, voices and ideas not like yours but never the less similar.

- In Peace Penelope

**London Bisexual Parade February 13th 1999** – To coincide with the London BiFest there will be a parade through Central London. The aim of the Parade is to make the bisexual community more visible – there are a lot of bi's and bi active people out there - . It is hoped that people will turn up with smiles, colourful costumes and a celebratory attitude to show the world that we are proud of our sexuality and our lifestyle. Bring banners affirming bisexuality.

The meeting point and time will be as follows:

Meeting point: Scotland Place off Scotland Yard, London, SW1. Nearest Tubes Embankment and Charing Cross. Nearest BR Charing Cross.

Meeting time: Assemble 12.15pm with the Parade moving off at about 12.30/12.40pm.

# Looking For You

As a regional organizer for the Central and Southeast regions, I felt, at times, isolated and frustrated organizing and building coalitions in the bisexual communities of my territories. As a National Coordinator those feelings of frustration are the same in many ways. At our recent organizer training retreat in Chicagoland, we continued our discussion of needing organizers on more localized areas to aid our coalition building, providing education and grassroots organizing.

We, in BiNet USA, pride ourselves as being a grass roots model for organizing but we need help in our efforts. We are experiencing growing pains and at this point in this discussion we call out to you, our local and state organizers, to join our efforts as a part of the leadership in BiNet USA. Some of our regions are extremely large and difficult in many respects for our current structure to actively and productively organize the "Bisexual" community of the United States.

If you find yourself "called" to building coalitions and aiding in our many initiatives, please contact our leadership. We have a place for you as an "Area Organizer". I can already hear the questions, so here are a few Q & A's that may help:

**Q: What kind of commitment on my time and resources will this be as an Area Organizer (AO)?**

**A:** That is entirely up to you. You and your Regional Organizers will define your positions based on the needs of your communities.

**Q: What will Area Organizers do?**

**A:** As I said before, AO's will be doing work depending on their communities, but here are what some of the AO's will be doing [maintaining regional membership list, planning regional retreats, stuffing envelopes for mailings, making sure local resource centers have BiNet USA brochures, planning regional fundraisers, facilitating an initiative in



their area] I am sure many more ideas will come out of these new positions. I look forward to hearing the ideas other regions will have to organize their regions with their AO's.

**Q: As an Area Organizer (AO), will I be part of the delegate body?**

**A:** Technically no, regions will still only have three votes each, but you will be able to reflect the views of your areas to your regional organizers. You will not be required to attend annual meetings or delegate meetings, but you will be encouraged to attend if you wish.

**Q: Are their official requirements for Area Organizers (AO)?**

**A:** No, you define it. You are the people doing the local work; you know

what your area needs. Feel free to call on any of us at any time for ideas, but you get to define your role. One of the neat things about new positions is they grow into something else, so we are not going to put any limitations on what you can do, as long as it reflects the goals, mission, and policies of BiNet USA.

**Q: Why are the positions called Area Organizers instead of local, city, or state, organizers?**

**A:** Communities are different, in size and needs. Some states are very small but have specific rural needs. Where other states are very large with very different metropolitan issues. Area Organizer allows us flexibility to provide as many positions as any area needs.

**Q: How long am I required to be an Area Organizer?**

**A:** Area Organizers, at this time have no terms. Since they are not part of the delegate body they are not elected positions, you can come and go as you wish, although we feel certain when you begin as an Area Organizer, you will surely get "bitten by the bug" and seek other leadership or organizing opportunities with BiNet USA.

Since our proposal of adding "Area Organizers" at the Chicago retreat, we have had over 15 people interested in helping as an Area Organizer. If you are interested in more information on how you can become involved as an area organizer and include the individual needs of your communities in our global picture please contact your regional organizers, Timothy Turner, National Coordinator at (317) 328-1512, or BiNet USA at 202-986-7186.

- Timothy D. Turner

# The First Time I Knew I Was Bi...

...was when I was 11 or 12 and realized everyone was! This happened because I needed to explain why I enjoyed looking at models in magazines and why the curve of a breast or the way a dress pressed the thigh of woman passing on the street would catch my eye and make me turn. I knew I wasn't homosexual. A luscious boy in seventh grade who I had a terrible crush on confirmed that. I also knew I wasn't purely het.

I don't know how I learned of bisexuality or where I had heard the term. I felt my thoughts were revolutionary enough, though, I could have created Bisexuality myself! It was always the term I used for my Grand Theory. To explain my slight attractions, and reconcile them with straight

culture, I reasoned I must be as straight as they come. How I felt was how any average straight person felt. By the same token, there were also no pure homosexuals.

I decided these almost straights and almost gays made up the majority of sexual orientation with a spectrum thinly strung between them. I figured somewhere there were a dozen or so people who were center stone Bi. After I had these epiphanies, I quite happily set aside thoughts on my sexuality, satisfied I had figured it all out. I was excited to be a little bit Bi. I was sure I wouldn't change. It was ok for people to like/lust/love whomever they chose even if we couldn't be honest and open about it. After all, 2.5 billion other straights were bi like me. I would

never move closer to the middle.

Since, I have been back and forth along that thinly strung spectrum a couple of times. I found out Kinsey and Klein and a few (hundred thousand) other people had figured out the secret before me. I've settled down somewhere in the middle of the scales, grids, and percentiles (for this month!). I look back and gently chuckle at that 11 or 12 year old girl who thought staring at cleavage in Seventeen and YM was the end all, be all in sexual exploration. Being the Mother of Bisexual Orientation is a great weight to bear. I can handle it.

- Terri Ann Johnson

## Australian Teen Survey

The Age, 17th November, 1998 250  
Spencer Street, Melbourne, 3000. Australia. (Fax: + 61-3-9601-2414 ) (E-mail: letters@theage.fairfax.com.au ) (http://www.theage.com.au )

**Homosexual and bisexual youths face censure at home and school, says a survey.** By SALLY HEATH.

Homosexual and bisexual youths suffer high levels of violence, abuse and discrimination, particularly in schools, a national survey has found. The survey, based on written responses from 750 males and females aged 14 to 21, found almost 70 per cent of the abuse occurred in schools.

The survey, which examined issues related to sexual and drug risk-taking, was conducted by the National Centre in HIV Social research at La Trobe University, under the direction of Dr Lynne Hillier. It is claimed to be the first Australian study into the lives of young people attracted to members of

their own sex. Based on almost equal numbers of responses from males and females, the survey found that young women were more likely to identify as "bisexual" than "lesbian", while young men were more likely to identify as gay'. The young men were also more likely to have a partner that matched their sexual attraction, while many women who were attracted to women reported dating men. One of the researchers, Dr Deborah Dempsey, said this may in part be explained by the greater opportunity for men to have sexual encounters with other men in public and highly sexual "gay" contexts.

In contrast, "young women's homosexual exploration is more likely to be in the context of established friendships". She said women may choose not to act on same-sex attraction feelings for fear of jeopardizing the relationship. Also, more young women

could hide their same-sex attraction while taking part in public and approved partnering with young men.

One-third of the survey respondents said they had been unfairly treated or discriminated against because of their sexuality and 13 per cent had been physically abused. Almost half had been verbally abused. The report said the high incidence of violence at school "represents a serious violation of these young people's rights to safety and of the duty of care of school authorities.

There also appeared to be a link between abuse and a high level of illegal drug use and alcohol among the group. Intravenous drugs had been used by 11 of those surveyed, with more women than men injecting drugs. Participants who had been physically or verbally abused were more likely to be using heroin, marijuana and party drugs than those who said they had not been abused.



## Ally Campaign is Thriving and Growing!

We are thrilled to report that the BiNet USA Ally Campaign is thriving and growing in its first six months of formal operation. For those of you who may not know, the Ally Campaign is a new project, started in 1998, by Deb Kolodny, former BiNet National Coordinator and current member of the BiNet National Advisory Board. As members of the BiNet Ally Campaign, non-bi organizations such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) pledge to explicitly include bisexuals and bisexual issues in their organizational policies and programs, as well as offering support to BiNet in the form of funds, outreach support, or other active organizational resources.

The program got off to an amazing start last June with nearly 20 national and regional organizations participating.

Much of the Ally Campaign activity this fall focused on gaining organizational sign-ons and press campaign support for the Bi Response Ad campaign, featured elsewhere in this newsletter. We are pleased to note that we have one new Ally Campaign member, the Alternatives to Marriage Project, which is based in Massachusetts and has a focus on exploring alternative relationship structures and forms of commitment for couples and family groups who do not wish to pursue traditional marriage. For more information about the Alternatives to Marriage Project, see

their web site at <http://www.netspace.org/atmp>. Additionally, a number of national groups have contacted us about upgrading to formal Ally status after seeing the phenomenal success of the national Bisexual Response Ad press campaign.

If you know of an organization which would be interested in becoming a member of the Ally Campaign, have them contact me directly at 415-626-5550, Ext. 126 or at [hfranek@carleton.edu](mailto:hfranek@carleton.edu) (no attachments, please). There is flexibility in the membership requirements according to organizational budget and structure and we are eager to work with you to develop an ongoing relationship!

- Heather Franek, BiNet USA Ally Campaign Coordinator

## Bisexual Youth Initiative Corner

Well, well, hello everyone. Unless you didn't know this it's my first time writing here and your first time reading what I wrote. Email me and let me know how your first time went. Oh yes, I'll tell ya' how it went for me too.

\*smile\*

My name is Penelope Williams and I am from New York City. I am a 23 Year old Woman of color and have been involved in local youth activism in NYC since 1993. I started doing street outreach to youth in the streets of NYC. I have reached youth who were homeless, sexworkers, substance abusers and highschool students in their schools. Generally youth who identified as either Gay, Bisexual, Lesbian, Transgendered.

BYI was established in 1994 by Brad Dent and other youth joined there after. I joined BYI in 1995. I met Brad in one of the best talk shows I ever was on including Roland Sintos Colomas and Stacey, a Bisexual youth who helped Brad with the first brochures. The show was were I first heard of The Bisexual Youth Initiative. Destiny? Yeah I think so.

At the time I was 20 years old and later

found out the that their was other places to do outreach at and not necessarily with a condom or dental dam.

BYI opened up a whole new commnity for me, introduced me to BiNet and Lorraine and NGLTF conference. Where I meet Elias and the first grrl I ever slept with( I've never been the same since). Actually that part came after the conference cause I remember we sat next to each other in the White House reminding Clinton's Deputy Assistant, Marsha Scott, to add Bi and Trans to Gay and Lesbian. Oh and that was also the time that NYAC, well NACYSO at the time had it's second or third annual meetings and Brad dragged me(actaully I went willingly) to Jesse Helms office ( really I did, you've got to believe me).

That was the summer of 1995. I went from a Local to National environment. I met people from all over the country. I found a Bi community with awesome people. I got letters from Bisexual youth from rural and urban areas thinking they were all Bi and alone. These are memories that mean alot to me. This is why I continue to stick around(also cause I found out

there's a whole lotta fucking work to do \*smile\*) BYI is the only one of it's kind. That has and will continue to reach out to Bi youth and their allies.

So I ask that you show this newsletter to a young person and if their BI tell them that they are not alone. If they are not tell them to take it to their GLBT youth group and show it to someone who is. Better yet have them contact a Regional Youth organizer in their area or me so they could let us know what they need and we could help them out. Better yet have them contact us cause they want to be a Regional Youth Organizer so that they can take Initiative and empower themselves as Bisexual youth who will know there is a community waiting for them. \*smile\*

Today as I write this I remember at the BiNet retreat this year. Lorraine (One of my best mentors. Now you know a Grrrl gotta expand on her poly experience) said, " You gotta write your history Penelope, cause you were there. If anybody else does, they'll do it wrong cause they were not." So here is my Herstory, my memories and feelings of a great initiative and the people within it. Even the ones that are no longer with us.

Peace Penelope 12-98

## **Bisexual and Lesbian Women Make Your Views on Safer Sex Known!**

I am an openly bisexual grad student in Counseling Psychology and am studying the experiences, attitudes and practices of *women who have had sexual relationships (of any duration) with women and men at any time from 1985 to the present*. Women who identify as bisexual, lesbian and heterosexual, and women of all colors, ages, incomes, etc. are needed.

*The surveys are designed to be totally anonymous, and all mailing list/contact information will be kept completely confidential by the researcher and destroyed at end of study. This research is totally voluntary — you can decide not to participate at any time.*

Surveys will be sent by U.S. mail, in envelopes marked "Personal, Confidential, to be opened by addressee only." The survey contains explicit questions about past sexual practices and takes about one hour to fill out. Postpaid return envelopes are provided. You may also get extra copies for interested friends.

For more information or to participate, contact me at any of the following:

*e-mail:* [nicelystudy@mindspring.com](mailto:nicelystudy@mindspring.com)

*phone:* (330) 972-8248 and leave message

*mail:* Study, P.O. Box 670594, Northfield, OH 44067

Thank you for your time and interest!

**Barb Nicely, M.A.**

**Ph.D. candidate, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio**

*This study has been approved by the University's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.*

## Bisexual Sightings

By Lani Ka-ahumanu

Send all of your bisexual sightings to:

<aloha@slip.net> or Lani Ka-ahumanu c/o BiNet USA, 4201 Wilson Boulevard #110-311, Arlington, VA 22203

Even as we stand proud and strong and our numbers increase, and we take our place and bring our issues to the national table, we also become visible targets for those who hate and fear difference. For many of us this is not a new experience, we already experience this fear and hatred because of our sex, gender, ethnic and/or racial background, our religious or spiritual beliefs and/or our class background. For some of us being an out bisexual is our first experience of being outside the so-called norms.

The first sighting in this issue is hard to read. Those who target people with hate speech, and/or violence for whatever reason mean to intimidate and scare us back into the closet. However, I see it as a wake-up call to action. Each and every single one of us can and do make a difference in the lives of those people we know and especially the people we love and consider family. To have the personal integrity to be our selves in our everyday lives every day of our lives is instrumental to real social change and to the healing of the society in which we live. Loving and respecting and celebrating our selves is a necessary r/evolutionary act in these tumultuous times. Hate crimes are message crimes - stand up to them.

**This copied from a William E. Woods, MPH email Public and Media/News Release "All statements are direct quotes from the tape of a show broadcast on the Christian Broadcast Network."**

Tonight, something exciting. I heard, what did I hear, some guy say before the show started? Something exciting tonight - the 100

day plan - the restoration of America. Now what is this all about? This is really, really cool. We haven't done this in many months - if you haven't heard it, fasten your seat belt. Now a lot of people, a lot of conservatives, right wingers, Christians, moral people who are involved in politics, try to figure out - well, how do we - how do we get the country back on track? And - a lot of their calculations and goals are how do you get the political power you need to then do the right things? Well, we're gonna go one step further than that tonight. We are going to start - and there's a very good reason for doing this - we are going to start- uh - we're going to discuss a plan - that will occur in the future - someday these things will happen.

Day 1 - all death row inmates must be executed tomorrow - tomorrow night beginning at 7:00 p.m. local time - must - everyone on death row - will be executed tomorrow night - regardless of the status of any appeals - if you're on death row, you will be executed tomorrow night.

Cut in Video

Ok - also on Day 2 - all homosexual establishments, including bars, bathhouses, massage parlors, houses of prostitution, publication houses, like homo porn deals and all - all homosexual establishments are ordered closed and padlocked by the local police or sheriff's department.

And finally on Day 2, anyone performing, attempting to perform, or encouraging homosexual

behavior from this day forward, upon conviction, will be executed. All right ...

Cut in Video

Ten - All employees in federal, state or local government organizations who are known homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, male lesbians, transgendered, any of those - any of those deals, right - at the UN conference on women, what did they say - so far they're up to eight genders? They got hermaphrodites, and they got herms and merms and ferms - have you heard about those? The hermaphrodites, the male hermaphrodites, the female hermaphrodites, we thought they forgot to add the germs, the worms and the perms - right - they had to add those - the germs, who were they - they were the ones that had AIDS. The perms - they were the one that already got the operation. And the worms - I think they were the ones, already buried - six feet under.

Anyway - uh - all these employees of government - who are known homosexual, bisexual, anything - or who are known to have cross-dressed or who have belonged to any homosexual organization - must be terminated with a 24 hour notice and no severance pay. Managers knowingly retaining homosexual, bisexual, etc. employees must pay restitution of double the amount of salary and benefits paid to the illicit employees and two - they will be flogged. And the same thing is true again now for any government employees who are openly pro-abortion.



(Continued from page 26)

# Cut in Video

(The video then repeats the phone call with "Miles" as quoted at the beginning of the tape, starting with "... to Miles, speak your mind.")

***Be brave, be strong, be courageous and outrageously your sweet bisexual selves. This all begins in your heart of hearts, then look yourself in the eye in a mirror and love yourself totally for being who you are - this coming out is most important and remember National Bisexual Visibility Day is February 14<sup>th</sup>. Remember organizations like Bi-NetUSA are here to support you. Remember you are not alone. Get involved. And remember BiPOL's motto: Educate! Advocate! Agitate!***

**Chocolate, Vanilla --- but what about strawberry?**

**Hello, are you really the Doctor in the house?**

**A Phone Call by Michael Page in to the Dr. Joy Brown Radio Talk Show on 1040AM, 8-21-98 (direct quotes)**

**D:** Michael you are on the air. I'm Dr. Joy Brown, hello.

**M:** Good afternoon, Dr. Brown, how are you?

**D:** Hi, Michael. Good.

**M:** Very good. My first question is, Uhm, do you acknowledge bisexuality as a valid sexual identity?

**D:** Uh.. why do you want to know?

**M:** Well, I'm bisexual, myself. I have been all my life, I'm 36 years old and uh...one of the greatest challenges I've ever faced is meeting other like-minded bisexuals...

**D:** What... so what do you care, whether, uh... I certainly wouldn't define myself as bisexual, and so... you're probably not trying to meet

me, so what do you care what my... my perspective is one way or the other?

**M:** Well, I'm just kind of wondering what the consensus is out there in the community. People as yourself who are in the business of helping others, and by the way you do a great job, I enjoy your show.

**D:** Thank you. To be quite honest with you, uh...I probably don't buy in to bisexuality very much, uh... I think it's a way of being upscale gay. I think that we, that under certain circumstances probably everybody is polymorphously perverse as Freud would say, and I think that men who are... who are straight become uhm...gay in prison, because there is no alternative. Does that mean that they're straight, that they're bisexual? Probably not. Does that mean?... Because it seems to me that...sexual orientation is something that we have surprisingly little control over, that if we could choose who would turn us on all of our lives, would be much more [unintelligible] and uh... chemistry is chemistry but I think you can probably close your eyes and think of England... and have sex with probably anybody under those circumstances, but the question is not, are you having sex with a man or a woman, but... who are you thinking about when you are having sex with that man or woman, and so, I... I know women who are, who are straight, define themselves as straight and... uh... as they aged, uh, they were widowed or divorced, or... or alone, became sexual with one another, not because they were gay, but because they wanted some physical kind of release and felt that, that was the only option opened to them. Does that make them bisexual? I don't think so, I think that they are straight women behaving in a way that was not particularly consistent with their, with their reality, but with their fantasies, so...

**M:** Uh...(trying to get a word in)

**D:**...so, I, I, you, you've been so nice to me and I, and I sort of don't want to say listen I think you're really not being honest with yourself, but if you're asking me as a professional, I would I think say bisexuality is... I think just because there's almost nothing in this life that we feel equally about. But, I mean, we can like both chocolate and and vanilla, but we have a ..., a clear preference for one, and given a choice, that we would choose one over the other. Ah.. now...

**M:** Uh...(trying to get a word in)

**D:** Now if there is only one, if there's only strawberry and and vanilla, then we may, I mean you see my point, and and my analogies get a little nutsy at some point, but...

**M:** well, the whole issue of sexuality is so entirely complex, that..

**D:** Uhum..

**M:** my feeling is that you're speaking from the vantage point of a heterosexual woman, that's how you identify....

**D:** yeah, but you didn't ask me who I dated, you I... significantly you weren't asking me as a heterosexual woman, you were asking me as Dr. Joy Brown, psychologist who's, clinical psychologist, well educated, well experienced, And I, I would respond, Ah..., As a heterosexual woman I'd say, what do I care? As long as your not dating me. I don't want the complication in my life.

**M:** I, I...

**D:** I, I don't want somebody cheating on me and I don't care who they cheat on me with whether it's the same sex or different.

**M:** Surely...

**D:** So presumably the question was addressed to me as a psychologist and I responded to it as a psychologist. I know, I know, I know, I mean look, if your asking me. Is that a universally held opinion - no, Is it a commonly held opinion - yes. Is it a politically correct opinion -not particularly...

(Continued from page 27)

**M:** But, It's definitely not, ah, It's, It's definitely not an upscale gay, ah, identity for myself I am truly...

**D:** Listen you asked me my opinion and I, Mike, I sort of prefaced the whole thing by saying "what the hell do you care about what, my opinion?"

**M:** All right, Ok, I understand. One thing I would like to mention if I may. I have created an OnLine Bi-Community, it's called The BiCafe, it's at [www.bicafe.com](http://www.bicafe.com)

**D:** Cool. THE END.

**"... close your eyes and think of London"! hmmm, perhaps Dr. Joy Brown needs to read our own Dr. Beth Firestein's BI-SEXUALITY: The Psychology and Politics of an Invisible Minority and that fabulous book BI ANY OTHER NAME and then find a support group. Michael thanks for sending this in...!**

### **LLEGÓ has changed their name...**

LLEGÓ The National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization.

Please note and correct in your databases, lists, etc.

**They now join the National GLB Veterans of American as the only two national GL organizations to be inclusive of bisexuals in their titles.**

**Muchas gracias mi amigas y amigos...**

### **OLDER BI RESOURCE:**

The first Unitarian Society of Chicago, 1996 Bobbi K. from Maine sent this in: The following review appeared in the Sept./Oct. 1998 (UU) World. Might be a useful resource in the vacuum about older bis.

**My Not-So-Gay Life** by Wallace Ruderholtz, Chicago (The first Uni-

tarian Society of Chicago, 1996). Rusterholtz, born in 1909, discusses his experiences as a bisexual man, his service in Iran during WWII, his memories of his Unitarian church in Chicago, and his opinions on today's political and religious issues., Order from Wallace Rusterholtz, c/o First Unitarian Church, 5650 S. Woodlawn Ave., Chicago, IL 60637. \$15

### **Bisexual Cleric and Gay Couple Test New Freedoms in South Africa**

By ANDREW SELSKY

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa -- The groom wore a gold suit to Saturday's wedding reception. The bride wore a white satin dress, a strand of pearls adorning his neck.

Four years after apartheid ended in favor of racial equality, gays are breaking barriers of their own. Two men were married secretly by an Anglican cleric. The pastor conducted the ceremony Friday night at a private home, declaring the couple married "in the name of God" after an exchange of vows and rings. But because of church prohibitions against same-sex marriages, it was not an Anglican wedding. "If word goes out that I conducted a gay wedding, I will lose my job to-

morrow," said the pastor, a bisexual who was interviewed on condition of anonymity. After a three-week honeymoon the couple plans to push those boundaries even further when they seek to legalize their marriage before a magistrate. If they're refused, they intend to appeal to the courts. This will be the first time it's been attempted in South Africa. The wedding came one month after the Anglican Church denounced homosexuality as a sin at a worldwide bishop's conference in England.

The revolutionary changes that have occurred in South Africa since apartheid's demise have not been restricted to race relations. Gay rights also have flourished. Under apartheid, homosexual sex was a crime and two members of the same sex could not legally kiss or be intimate in other ways in public. In 1996, South Africa became the first country to have a constitutional clause preventing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Last May, a high court struck down apartheid-era laws against gay and lesbian sex. And earlier this year, several insurance companies allowed same-sex partners to be listed as dependents for insurance benefits.

Associated Press, September 5, 1998

**CONGRATS!!! And what's happening here? 19 states still have sodomy laws ( Georgia courts just struck down their sodomy law); we don't have federal protection against discrimination based on sexual and/or gender orientation! Then there is Don't Ask, Don't Tell - we can still get kicked out of the military for being bisexual, lesbian and gay! What's up with that? What's up with your state and the federal gov't? What you gonna do about it? Get involved! VOTE!**

### **Mark Your Calendars Now!**

**July 23-25 1999**

**For the Annual  
BiNet USA  
Membership Meeting!!!**

## Interview with Victim Advocate, Emily Pitt

*Fenway Community Health Center is a Boston-based GLBT health provider.*

*They provide a number of Bisexual/Transgender services including: BiCurious Men's discussion group, Color Me Healthy, Smoke-Free Bodies, The GLBT Helpline and Peer Listening Line, Sabor A MI, and a variety of other services including medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment, and health promotions. Their VRP program is an excellent example of a GLBT program that remembers Bisexuals.*

*Emily Pitt, Victim Advocate, allowed me to interview her about their VRP program: "I do see many cases involving bisexuals; often women who are married to men and get involved with a woman, and that's when the abuse heats up from the husband/boyfriend. Or they are leaving the relationship, or there's no communication, or they were in a strictly heterosexual marriage that*

*was abusive, and as they came out of it, they realized they were attracted to women and feel more comfortable working with me, where they can be out, instead of at a traditional battered women program where they may have to be closeted. I also see men who are bi and abused by their male or female partners.*

Interview with Em:

W. Do you know the percentage of bi domestic violence issues you see, vs gay?

E. I am working on getting the numbers on that. We are working on our database right now, and a researcher has been coming in to do some work on it to get ready for the national hate crimes report which comes out in March. I asked her to run some numbers for me, to see what we get. However, it all depends on how people identify, and whether they're willing to tell us how they identify. We don't make assumptions about identity, so a lot of people end up in the category "questioning/unsure" if they don't want to say.

W. Do you see more violence in "mixed" couples (where one is bisexual and one is monosexual?) than strictly gay or bi couples?

E. Do you mean more violence within

those types of relationships, or do you mean greater frequency of violent relationships? I'd say that the majority of bi cases I see here (and I think the other advocates would agree with me on this) happen when a woman is married to/dating a man, and then she either a) discovers her attraction to women, or b) suddenly acts on an attraction that has already been there but suppressed, or kept hidden from him. Sometimes a relationship that has been somewhat controlling, but not violent, becomes violent (he is threatened by her being with women, expressing an interest in being with women, etc; or controlling, but not violent, becomes violent (he is threatened by her being with women, expressing an interest in being with women, etc; or she acts on it without telling him, and he finds out, or she decides that she wants to leave him and be with her) when this happens. Usually the violence doesn't just suddenly begin out of nowhere; usually there has been some type of power/control imbalance in the relationship to begin with.

Also, I see plenty of cases involving domestic violence in same-sex, monogamous relationships, both with men and with women, where the victim simply happens to identify as bi. We don't usually ask whether or not the perpetrator is bi, but sometimes that comes out in the course of conversation. Once in a very blue moon, I see a case involving a man who is bi, and involved with a heterosexual woman, and the man appears to be the victim of violence perpetrated by the woman. I've only seen one or two of those cases since I've worked here, though.

W. Is there one or two big hot spots in bi relationships (excuses for violence)? Or are the problems more global - jealousy, control, insecurities?

E. Domestic violence in general is about power and control. It's one per-

son's attempts to maintain power and control over their intimate partner. That holds true for all domestic violence, regardless of the sexual orientation of the people involved. In bi relationships, I've already mentioned a few things that seem to trigger violence. But again, I'd caution against putting too much emphasis on the triggers because a batterer will usually find any excuse to batter. Often it just matters what is the most convenient excuse, so if there is jealousy because one partner is monosexual while the other is bi, then that might be the most convenient excuse, but it could just as easily be that he doesn't like the way his boyfriend ties his shoes, or she doesn't like her girlfriend having such a close relationship with her mother, or he thought his wife looked at another man/woman just a little too long.

W. Are there special considerations you need to take when handling bi domestic violence concerns?

E. In all GLBT cases, identity can be a huge issue. Often a woman who is being battered by a man but identifies as bi, is eligible for services at a traditional battered women's program which are much more plentiful than services for GLBT victims) but doesn't feel comfortable there because she's not sure she can be out.

Special issues do come up around police involvement, for example when both the batterer and the victim are women, sometimes police fail to make arrests that should be made because the fighting is looked at more as a "cat fight" than as the serious, often life-threatening violence that it really is. Or men might not get the necessary intervention from police because it is assumed that they can defend themselves.

People who are in same-sex relationships, or people who identify as bi but are in opposite-sex relationships,

*(Continued on page 30)*

(Continued from page 29)

have the same right to police protection and restraining orders as do people who identify as heterosexual. Often people do not realize that they are eligible for services, or don't think of the police or courts as outlets that might be helpful. Also, people who are in poly relationships might be hesitant to call police, access courts, etc, because they fear the special kinds of homo-bi-phobia they may have to deal with. Often, getting a restraining order means having to out yourself in an open courtroom where anyone (including your boss or your mother, theoretically) could be sitting. This is often intimidating.

Another issue involved in same-sex relationships is that many of us don't have any kind of healthy model to look at, were taught to be ashamed of our love for the same gender, and thus are unable to recognize when things are out of control, that there is some other, healthier way to be in a loving relationship. Another problem we frequently see is our community's hesitance to look at the problem. After all, the world "out there" has been pathologizing our relationships since the dawn of time. The question we unfortunately hear in the community, is why would we want to call attention to what's wrong with our relationships, when we are just starting to get some sympathy for our issues in general?

And of course, that leads into the issue that, since our relationships are pathologized by the world "out there," often violence in our community is looked at as simply a form of S&M, the implication being, of course, that the victim likes it. Of course S&M communities exist in the straight world as well, but all heterosexual relationships aren't pathologized based on that. Abuse can come into play around the adherence to boundaries. Domestic violence does occur in the S&M community, but it occurs when safewords are violated and boundaries are not respected. There is actually some involvement in the S&M communities to speak out against domestic violence as well. S&M is not domestic violence, and victims of domestic violence do not "like it." But bi relationships, in all their varieties, are

probably most often to be pathologized, and although S&M communities exist in the straight world also, that issue is often overlooked as people who don't understand bi relationships or S&M relationships, look at all bi relationships as perverted, and misunderstand.

W. Do you handle many transgender domestic violence problems?

E. Not many people realize this, but domestic violence refers to not only violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, but also by a member of one's immediate family (or a roommate, for that matter—at least in Massachusetts; it varies from state to state). I have seen a few cases involving gender-variant folks who were dealing with violence perpetrated by family members. We do get the more traditional types of domestic violence cases in relationships involving a transgendered individual and an intimate partner, and yes I have had a few domestic violence cases involving people who identify as transgendered, but we are still working on getting the word out to trans communities that our services are available to them.

The fact that we have fewer cases involving trans victims does not mean that it doesn't happen in their relationships. The current thinking on prevalence rates of domestic violence is that 25-33% of all relationships involve domestic violence, whether straight, bi, gay, lesbian, or whether the partners fit into traditional gender categories or not.

W. Do you see trends of violence in poly couples more so than monogamous? or vice-a versa?

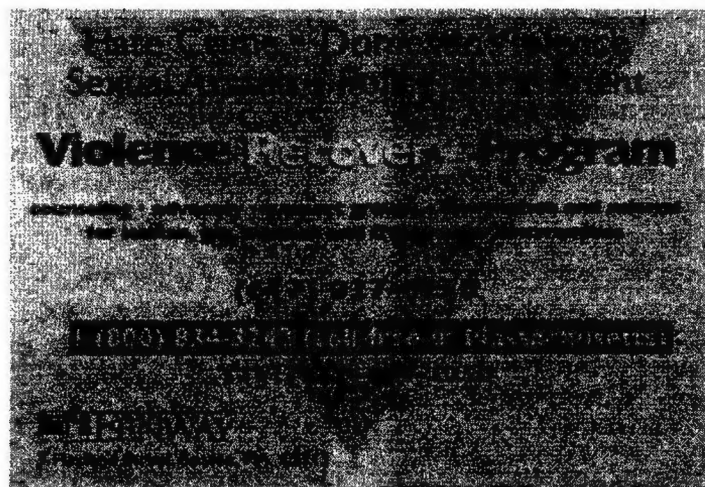
E. This doesn't always come out in our interviews with clients, so we're not always sure. I have seen cases where poly couples are involved in domestic violence, and boundaries get violated. A batterer exposing his partner to HIV or something else, practicing unsafe sex. I've seen cases where a secondary partner was battered by one or both members of a couple. A lot of my clients who are in poly relationships actually identify as gay, although I've probably seen a little bit of everything. Domestic violence can take all types of different forms.

W. How do your bisexual clients find you? is there good outreach in the community?

E. Not enough. Hopefully stories like yours will help. We do general outreach to GLBT organizations in general, although we have worked to get our name out there to some primarily bi organizations.

W. Does biphobia/transphobia play a part in domestic violence?

E. But of course. In all the ways I've mentioned.





(Continued from page 20)

mean breaking away from our alliances, rather encourage our allies at both polarities to expand their focus, take a stake and stand on the issue of equality for all, educate their allies, and facilitate a new viable dialogue. While setting up our new camp on the spectrum, we must not limit our scope in any way through our bias and personal ignorance's. We should embrace the controversial subsets of our community. For each one of us this may be a personal struggle, including myself, but the benefits far weigh out our fears and insecurities. A house divided falls ... our bridge can provide safe journeys over those troubled waters of institutionalism, exclusion, and offensive & defensive mechanisms. And move on the task of equality, a society where we can live, develop and foster recognition of all oppressed peoples

and love those we wish without breaking down a society but instead nurture it to its full potential. In the words of one of my bumper stickers that I live each day by ... "No one is free when others are oppressed." (End of panel statement)

I hope my thoughts provoke a new discussion on not only our agenda but on the question of outreach. Many are not hearing our call. Why is that occurring? Where are they? And how can we reach out and represent them as a contingency of the "Bisexual" movement.

The "our" place I envision is a goal not an immediate action. As a representative of the movement, I feel many are not heard due to various reasons from our current slanted politics towards the Gay & Lesbian community to our vanilla representation of leadership. Our Transgendered colleagues did not enter into this discussion due to

the initial question of the panel but in "our" new place we can provide a forum for their issues which are being lost in agendas and have never found a completely safe haven in the Gay & Lesbian community. Although we have many similar issues, the diversity of the "Bisexual" and Transgendered communities bring other issues to the table that necessitates an expanded focus and a new forum for discussion. We, as coordinators and organizers, can not expect the Gay & Lesbian community to voice "our" movement as well as their own. They have done incredible work to include our issues. Now let us move to a place where we can expand do the same. -- A place where we can expand to the Gay & Lesbian movement and the Heterosexual closet to unite as a diverse sexual culture in our society.

- Timothy D. Turner

(Continued from page 16)

-Julie W

**Southwest News:** BiNet Colorado got off to a great jumpstart this summer, with a new surge of energy. Our first event in a long time was a weekend retreat, which proved to be moving, inspiring, and community building. Operating primarily out of the Boulder/Denver area, we are sponsoring quarterly, potluck socials in Boulder as well as alternating those with going out for dinner in Denver. We have a few contacts in outlying, rural areas and as time permits, look forward to doing more outreach throughout the state.

We have an ongoing, open women's group, which meets monthly in Boulder and a support group for bi-married men, which meets in Denver. Please feel free to call for more info and join us at one of our events. contact info: binetcolo@aol.com and 303-499-5777

BiNetAZ has undergone some more transformation this year with some new leadership. Kathe Morton and Monica Helms are the new co-chairs with Fred and Tim taking on new roles with the web page, database

and

newsletter. Kathe had great success earlier this year as a prime organizer for the first ever SW conference on bisexuality. Monica first gained notoriety as an author/activist and transexual having onceserved on a US naval submarine as a man. The organization celebrated its third year and continues to provide education, social and support functions.

contact info: Ph: 602 280 9074 email: binetaz@binetaz.org web: binetaz.org

We are happy to announce that BiNetNM has a new state coordinator, Elizabeth Milford. New Mexico holds a regular pot luck the 2nd sunday of the month in the evening, and they are planning a special Valentine

Dance this year in Albuquerque. Look for some great new happenings out there! contact info: Ph: 505 255 4697 email: binet-nm@dnatek.net mailing address: PO Box 9901, Albuquerque, NM 87119

- Ron Owens

**Central News:** Central Regional Organizer Robert Morrison has unfortunately resigned, so we are looking for a new RG. With plans in the works to increase bi activism in the Eastern part of the

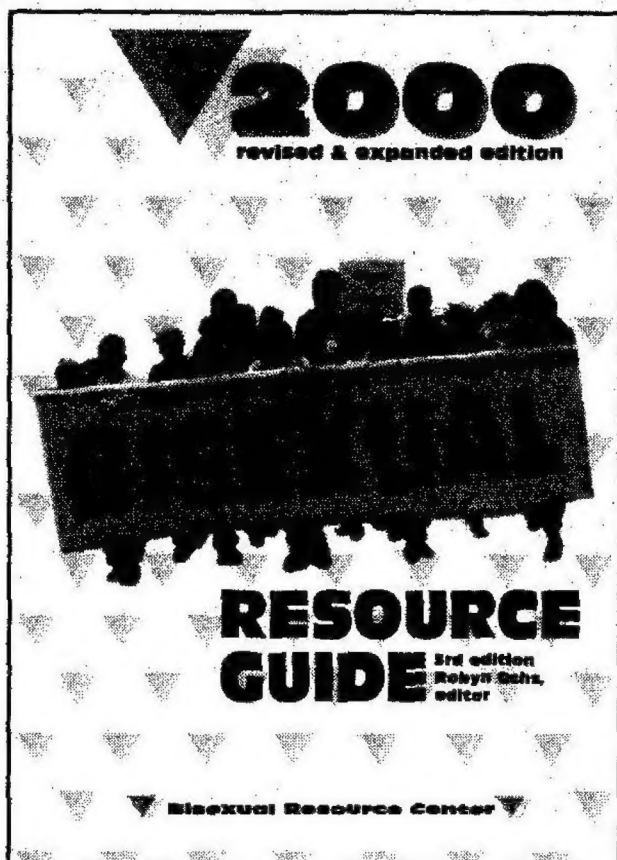
Midwest, we are anxious to have someone fill this position, as well as to become Local Organizers, as quickly as possible. If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact Brett Beemyn, brett.beemyn@ccmail.wiu.edu or 309-298-3202.

**South Central News:** Hello everyone!

I just thought I'd let everyone know that Great things are going on in Texas! We are having a statewide meeting Friday after next, 1/15, to do work on our upcoming conference and to discuss EBAH (so far, it appears that none of the groups in our state have been working on it, but we aim to change this :) ).

Congrats to G.G. Raven Wilbur for a great interview with Fritz Klein on After Hours radio! the After Hours radio show is broadcast every Saturday night from 12:00 to 3:00am on 90.1 KPFT in Houston and Simulcast in Bryan/College Station. Each week of the month, a different segment of the queer community is featured. The Bisexual show is the first Sat. of each month.

# Announcing the New **BISEXUAL RESOURCE GUIDE 2000**



- 100 more pages! 300 total!
- More than 400 new and 1700 updated listings!
- Many new articles loaded with information!
- 49 countries represented!
- A revised and expanded Bi-Bibliography!
- Bi Resources on the Internet!
- Updated Bi Film Guide!

Editor Robyn Ochs and Boston's Bisexual Resource Center are thrilled and proud to present the 3rd Edition of the Bisexual Resource Guide 2000. More than 150 volunteers from every corner of the globe have produced the most comprehensive directory ever. Every kind of bisexual and bi-inclusive organization in the world is in here — youth groups and media, bi People of Color coalitions and cross-cultural alliances, political groups and social gatherings, universities, religious centers, bookstores, HIV/AIDS support, places to dance and sing, and much, much more.

**Now here's more good news.** Even though the newstand price for the **Bisexual Resource Guide 2000** is now \$12.95, we at the BRC want BiNet members to get a break. So, we'll continue to offer the **Guide** to you for only \$9.95. And, if you order two or more copies, we'll include a **FREE Bi Pride Bumpersticker** (as seen on our website).

To order, mail this form with your payment to:  
**THE BISEXUAL RESOURCE CENTER (BRC) Dept. BN2**  
P.O. Box 400639  
Cambridge, MA 02140

Visit the BRC and the Guide <<http://www.biresource.org>>, send us email <[brc@biresource.org](mailto:brc@biresource.org)>, or call us at 617-424-9595.

☐ Individual ☐ Group

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_

Zip+4/PostalCode \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity: _____ Guides @ \$9.95 each	subtotal	\$ _____
Additional Donation (tax deductible)	[+]	\$ _____
<b>Total amount enclosed</b> (U.S. Dollars)	[=]	\$ _____

☐ Check (payable to Bisexual Resource Center) ☐ Money Order (in US \$\$ or International Money Order only)

For ordering 2 or more copies, please send my **FREE Bi Pride Bumpersticker** ☐ *with* text ☐ *without* text.

**Thank you for your support.**

BRC / BN2

"BiNet News." BiNet News., winter 1998, p. [1]. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/MDLPYX447255244/AHSl?](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/MDLPYX447255244/AHSl?u=ubcolumbia&sid=bookmark-AHSl)  
[u=ubcolumbia&sid=bookmark-AHSl](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/MDLPYX447255244/AHSl?u=ubcolumbia&sid=bookmark-AHSl). Accessed 30 Dec. 2024.